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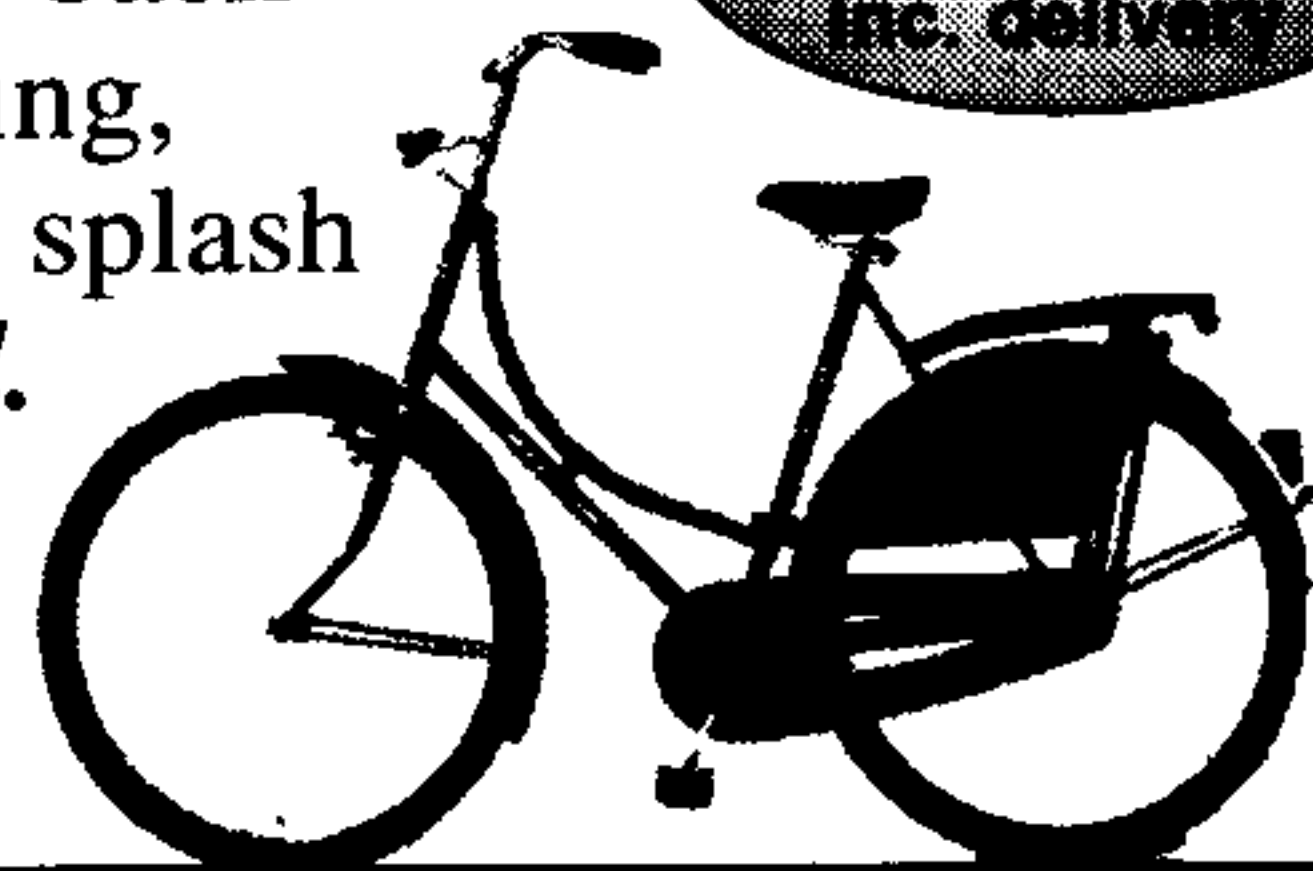
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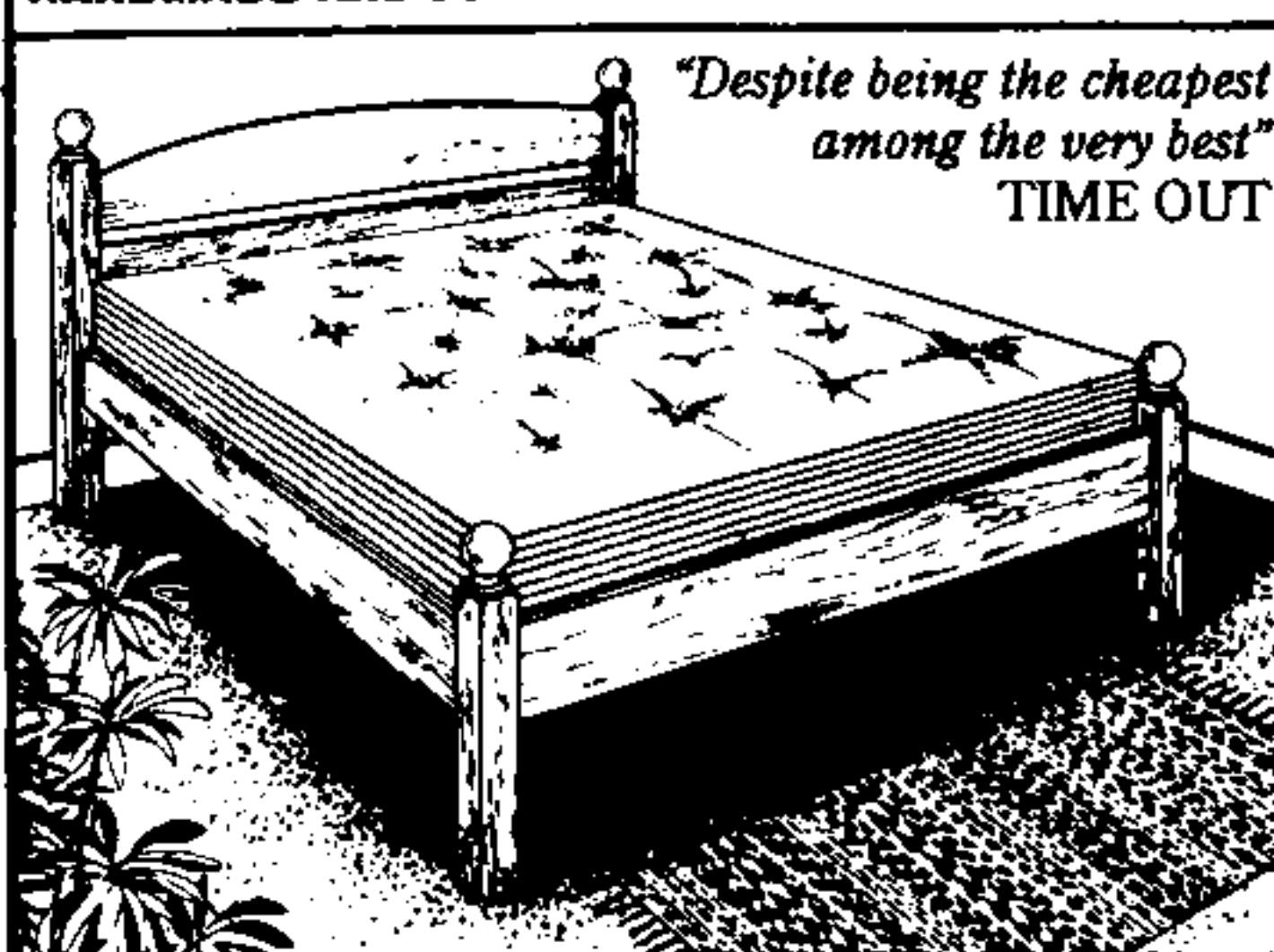


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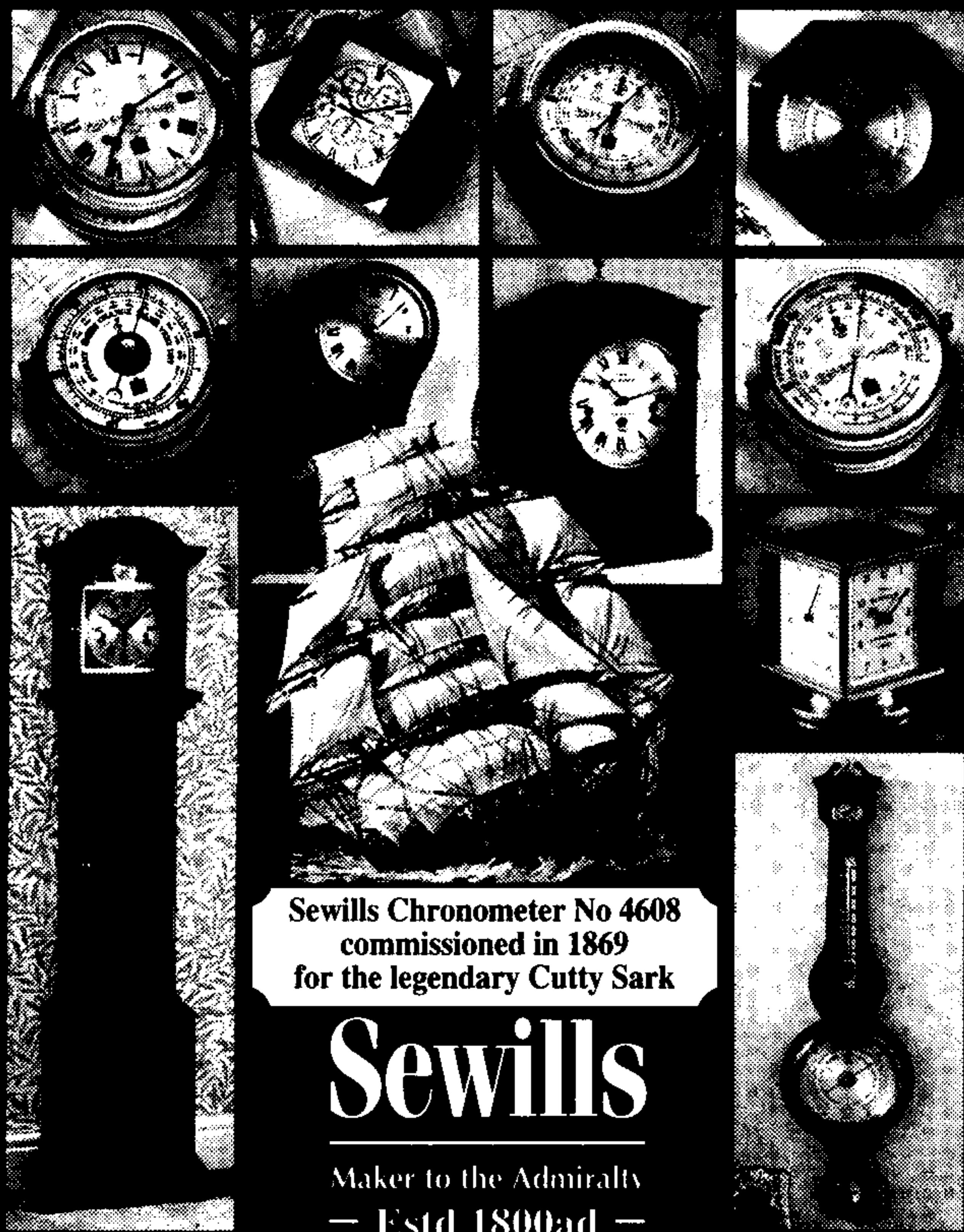
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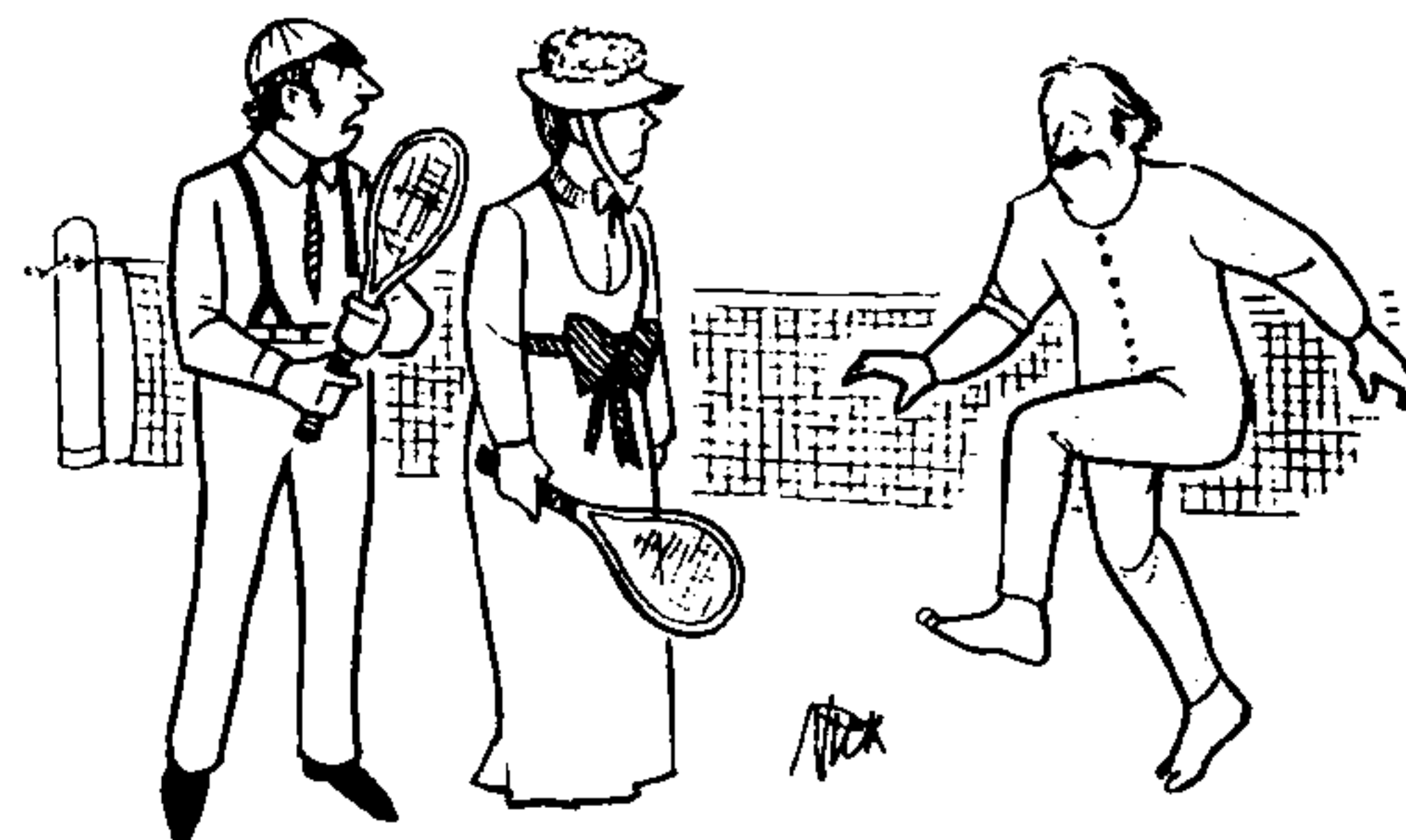
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As soon as Hague became an MP in 1989 he was further hired as a paid adviser to McKinsey. More intriguingly, he continued to take cash from the management consultants from 1990 until 1993 while he was parliamentary private secretary (PPS)

COLOUR SECTION

Sir Peter is 55. His pension arrangements are such that if he retires at 60, his pension for life will be at least £200,000 a year. Once a diehard Tory, he now toes the "new" Labour line. "It has become increasingly clear to me," he says, "that we were in danger of creating a new underclass."



"Good heavens, Lucinda – it's a streaker"

SECRET OF SHAME

JUST FANCY THAT!

Tory leadership: Round One. A photograph of Kenneth Clarke holding pint and saying: "Things can only get bitter."

— Front cover of *Private Eye* 926, on sale 11 June 1997.

"And finally... The Tory knives are still out. There's a perfect slogan for the leadership election: Things Can Only Get Bitter."

— Editorial in the *Sun*, 12 June 1997.

DURING one of Express Newspapers' periodic financial crises a few years ago, Lord Stevens of Ludgate hit on the bright idea of forming a partnership with sleazebucket David "The Slug" Sullivan to push the *Daily Star* downmarket. The policy was so successful that readers and advertisers deserted *en masse*, forcing the wretched Stevens to apologise and vow that he had learned his lesson.

Now, however, the cash-strapped Express Group is once again venturing into the skin trade. Melinda Messenger, the exciting and fragrant successor to Samantha Fox, posed a few weeks ago for the *Daily Star's* glamour photographer Jean Savage. These were rather more adventurous than the usual Messenger shots: one, indeed, was actually full-frontal.

Quite a scoop for the sleazy *Star*? Not quite. Express executives were horrified at the idea that such tasteless photographs should appear in a "family newspaper" (*sic*) — and so, exhibiting the hypocrisy for which they are famous, they secretly sold the snaps on to *Mayfair* magazine, a very downmarket rag owned by porn king Paul Raymond.

Ms Messenger will duly display her delights all over the next issue. The asking price, as revealed by an invoice dated 14 May, was £10,750, including VAT. We ask our readers to treat this information with some discretion, since the Express Group hasn't yet broken the news to the lovely Melinda or her aggressive agent Yvonne Paul. As Ms Paul hates the Paul Raymond Organisation with a vengeance, she may not be best pleased.

FOLLOWING Express editor Richard "Monk" Addiss's latest frenzy of sackings and back-stabbings, a useful notice has appeared in the latest issue of the paper's in-house journal, *The Crusader*: "Stress counselling is now available 24 hours a day to staff at Express Newspapers. A team of qualified counsellors, clinical psychologists, registered mental nurses and social workers are on hand to smooth and sooth your furrowed brows."

No mention, oddly, of straitjackets.

ANYONE wanting a good laugh at journalists' expense need look no further than Ben Brown's widely-praised new play *All Things Considered*, which includes a splendid performance by Jane Slavin as a ruthless hackette.

Brown knows a thing or two about newspapers: a couple of years ago he wrote some pieces about the Edinburgh festival for the *Guardian* at the behest of Joanna Coles, the flame-haired arts correspondent. La Coles then went on to become the paper's star interviewer before departing to New York a few weeks ago.

Oddly enough, the hackette in Brown's play is also a redheaded interviewer from the *Grauniad* called Joanna. She is spectacularly rude, hectoring and insensitive. During a post-performance seminar last week, Brown admitted that the character was inspired by someone he had met. Who could he possibly mean?

EXECUTIVES at the *New Yorker* must have been well pleased by the handsome puff-pieces for its special "Indian fiction" issue in the *Times* last week.

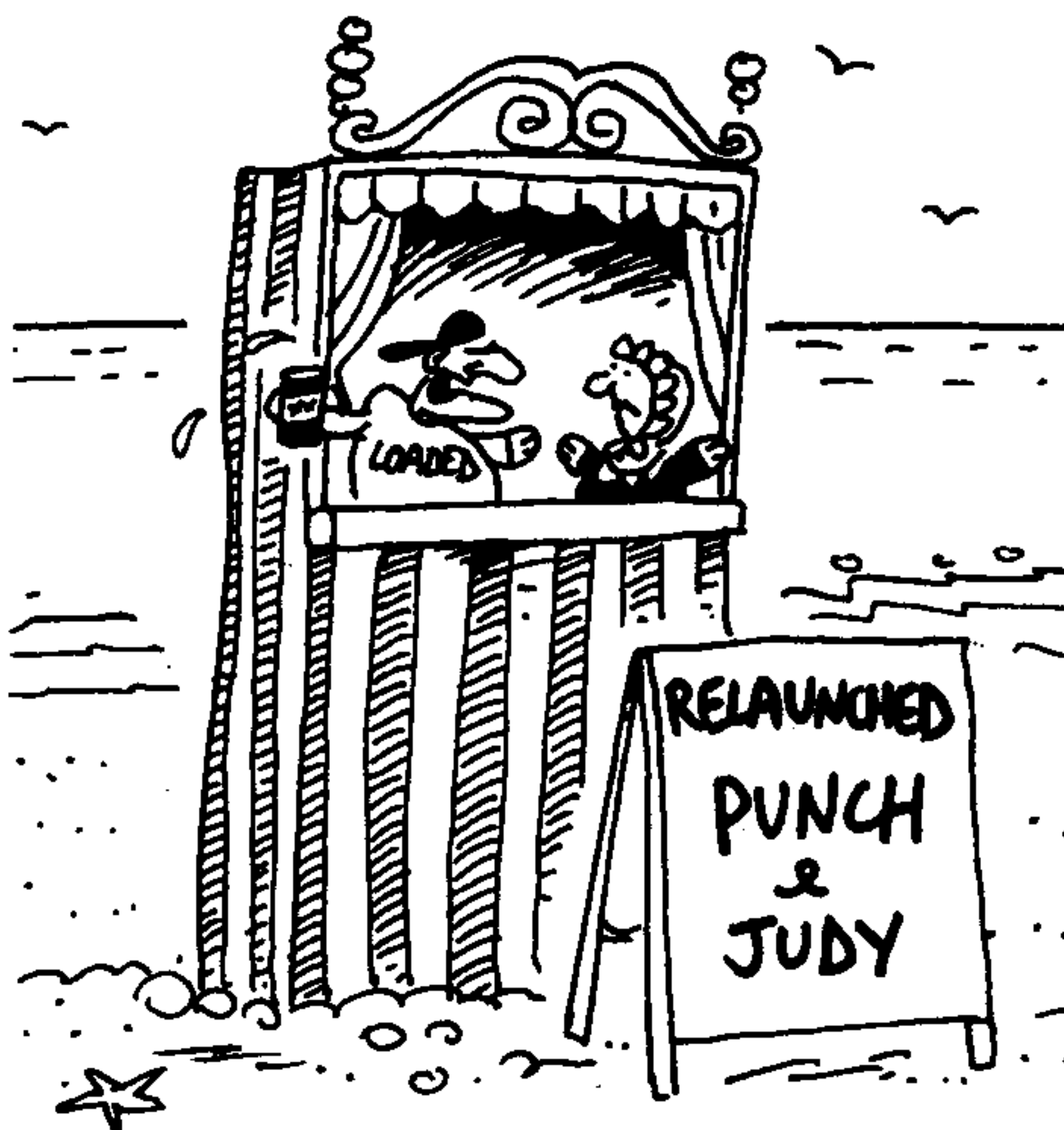
Puff number one was a "foreign news" story by the *Times's* New York correspondent, Tunku Varadarajan. In his hymn of praise to the *New Yorker*, he neglected to mention that the Indian issue includes a gushing profile of, er, Tunku Varadarajan — flatteringly portrayed as "one of the city's most in-demand bachelors".

As if this weren't enough, *Times* editor Peter Stothard continued the puffery in an enraptured editorial: "The *New Yorker* has this week published an issue dedicated entirely to fiction writing from India. The magazine, the flagship of American letters, has chosen sagely: the issue is a rich treat of words and wit..."

By a curious coincidence, Stothard is a very old friend (and Oxford contemporary) of *New Yorker* editrix Tina Brown. Indeed he got his first break in Fleet Street, nearly 20 years ago, when Tina persuaded her husband Harry Evans to give young Peter a staff job on the *Sunday Times*. How touching to see he has at last repaid the debt.

NEW *Punch* editor Paul Spike went apoplectic two weeks ago when he was treated to a lofty put-down by the *Spectator's* media pundit, Stephen Glover. The only thing worth reading in *Punch*. Glover suggested, was the weekly piece by Alexander Chancellor — who "shines like a jewel in a dung-heap".

Chancellor was not entirely grateful for the compliment. Since he is an old chum of Glover, he feared Spike might now turn against him — thus jeopardising the £1,000 a week he collects for his brief column. So the desperate hack has penned a self-abasing letter to his editor, denying that he is a jewel in a dung-heap. "I am," he grovels, "more like a turd in an oyster-bed."



"Tits out for the lads, slag"

FEARFUL that his friend Gordon Brown may use his July budget to do away with the tax fiddle known as profit-related pay (PRP), Labour (*sic*) peer Lord Hollick is desperately trying to foist a PRP scheme on his United Provincial Newspapers employees.

At the beginning of June UPN staff were suddenly told they would have the chance to "vote yourself more pay" if they approved a PRP scheme before the end of the month. All they had to do was agree a "nominal" salary cut which would be more than made up for in PRP backhanders.

Hollick's director were sent to the outposts of the newspaper empire, such as the *Yorkshire Post* and *Sheffield Star*, openly trying to sell the scheme as a tax dodge that's perfectly legal — for now. But suspicious hacks who quizzed the directors quickly discovered why the company was so keen to achieve the necessary 80 percent majority for the move: Hollick's company is to hold on to £800,000 of the £2m clawed back from the taxman.

The smart money is now on the good lord's minions giving him a bloody nose by voting against the scheme. No doubt Gordon Brown will be pleased to retain £2m to help with the budget deficit — even if it does stop filthy rich Hollick becoming even richer.



"AS STANDARDS in broadcasting continue to 'dumb-down' at an alarming rate — topless darts, karaoke from the pub and cheap quiz shows — there is one channel intent on lifting the cultural level of its programming," a news story in the *Mail on Sunday* revealed two weeks ago.

The Performance Channel on cable TV "has built a reputation as the station which sets the highest cultural standards". All very true, no doubt. But in a fit of absent-mindedness, the paper completely forgot to add that the Performance Channel just happens to be owned by Associated Newspapers — proprietor of the *Mail on Sunday*.

HOW THEY ARE RELATED

THE British pavilion at the Venice Biennale art exhibition was given over to the trendy conceptualist Rachel Whiteread — former Turner Prize winner — and her plaster casts of familiar household objects such as baths and books.

Whiteread was chosen to represent her country by the British Council and its visual arts officer, Andrea Rose, a groupie of all that is wacky in contemporary art. But reviews were poor. "Crazily overrated," wrote one critic. "A one-idea woman," argued another.

Still, Ms Rose's judgment was vindicated by a rave review from the *Observer's* William Feaver. "How come she achieves so much?" he sighed admiringly after seeing Whiteread's show. He found her "reified voids" almost "Beckettian". If Andrea Rose wishes to thank Feaver, she is well-placed to do so: he is her husband.

I-I-I Special

THIS issue's Kim Il Sung Memorial Award for self-celebration goes to Lorna Frame of the *Daily Record*, who enlivened an article about innumeracy with 40 references to herself.

100 Years Ago Correction

In our report on Mr Aitken's involvement with a number of distinguished Arabian businessmen an unfortunate typographical error was introduced. Thus the sentence read: "Aitken tried to procure girls for the Arabs". This of course should have read "grills", a favourite snack for Middle Eastern dignitaries, and it was quite understandable for Mr Aitken to provide grills for his friends at any time, day or night, in the privacy of their own sauna. Big grills, little grills, Danish grills, and, of course, grills dressed up as French maids. We regret any confusion caused by this misprint. (*Eye* 870)

Legal News

LESS THAN two days after Owen Oyston heard on the little radio in his cell that three judges had given him leave to appeal against his rape conviction, his prosecutrix, Helen Grindrod QC, was a "keynote speaker" at a conference on rape and criminal justice.

"Her most recent courtroom victory was the successful prosecution of millionaire rapist Owen Oyston," gushed the brochure for last week's conference organised by the Centre for Research on Violence, Abuse and Gender Relations of Leeds Metropolitan University. In her speech, Grindrod proposed the "curtailment of judges' discretionary powers to permit previous sexual history evidence".

Over at the appeal court such evidence had just been admitted into Oyston's appeal case by the lord chief justice, Lord Bingham, sitting with Mr Justice Rougier and Mr Justice Kay. The evidence included a letter, apparently written in 1992 by Oyston's presumed victim, Miss B, to a boy she met on holiday in Crete.

Oyston's QC, Anthony Scrivener, reminded Lord Bingham that when the trial judge, Mr Justice McCullough, was jailing Oyston for six years, he declared that Miss B had been "young, dependent and vulnerable", and that when she was giving evidence about her rape in 1992 she said she had had sex only once before, with a boy at school. "I hate sex," she testified. She claimed that she never had an affair with Oyston, and had visited his Lancashire castle, Claughton Hall, only once — when she was taken there for the alleged rape.

"My Lord, it's a very frank and explicit letter about sexual matters," he said of the newly-discovered *billet doux*, before reading out some of Miss B's alleged phrases to the boy from Crete: "Don't be fucking too many girls because you'll need some energy left for when I come back over... If you have, you won't have by the time I've finished with you because this time I'm going to be staying sober."

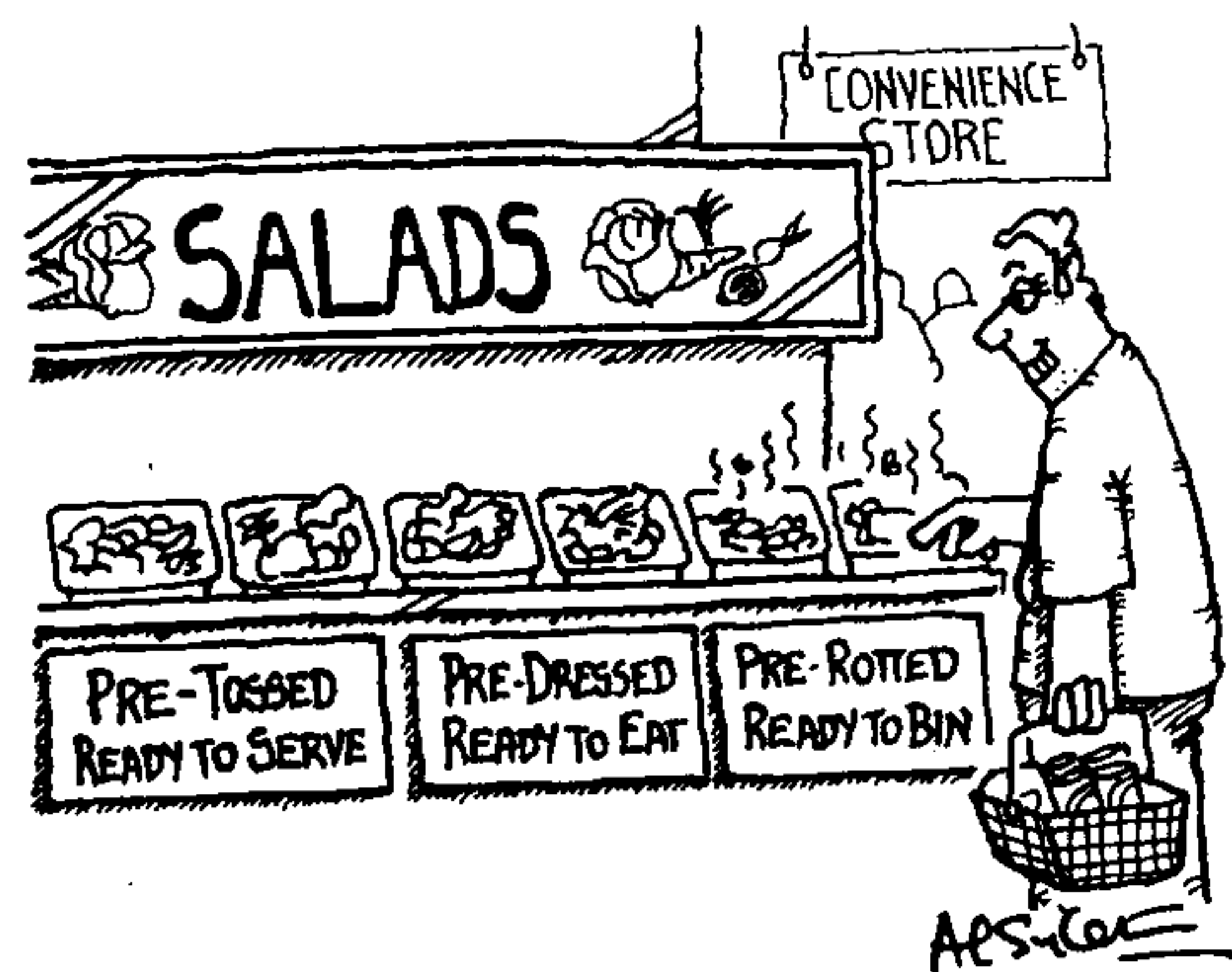
Page 4, discussing holiday snaps, reads: "I don't know whatever possessed me, but I've ordered one of us two to be blown up. I must be mental — ha ha. No, I like to know my men. I've got a few good ones though and one of them this guy's got his dick out!!"

Other new evidence includes a statement by a housekeeper, said to have worked out Miss B's true identity from the *News of the World* and to remember Miss B saying: "I've been to a castle and it was great. I've had a look round and I'm going there again."

Two days after the appearance of the new evidence at the appeal court, and despite her conference billing as the successful prosecutor of the man in the big hat, Helen Grindrod QC took care to deliver her speech without once mentioning Oyston. Noting the presence of his solicitor, Lindsay Moffatt, in the audience, Grindrod told a reporter: "Moffatt is here checking up on me and trying to catch me out. Does she really think I am so stupid as to talk about the case when it is sub judice?"

Can this careful lawyer be the same Helen Grindrod described last November by *The Lawyer*, a trade journal? The magazine reported that, at a party in Manchester to celebrate the Oyston conviction, Grindrod "handed out gold-plated key rings in the shape of a man sporting a large fedora. But the hat wasn't the only large thing protruding from the extremely well-endowed gentleman..."

As well as being a QC, Helen Grindrod is a deputy circuit judge.



HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN



HALLO! WHEN Queen Brenda visited the Sussex town of Hastings, its residents swelled with pride. HRH was grandly presented with a Gold Winkle Club badge as her husband and mother had been before her. She then officially opened the new Priory Meadow Shopping Centre.

One thing puzzled the Marquesa, though. Where had the town's famously large number of vagrants disappeared to? When the familiar faces returned to street corners they told a strange story of being loaded on to a coach, along with their homeless colleagues, and driven for an all-expenses paid trip to sunny Margate. Hastings council denies all knowledge of their tale. How strange!

HALLO! BAD news for my charming friend David "Rommel" Montgomery, the Mirror Group supremo who has rightly fought so hard to guard the privacy of himself and his delightful extra-marital legover, the Countess of Woolton.

Tragically "Rommel" and his *Sunday Mirror* editrix Bridget Rowe have recently found themselves on the wrong end of a breach of privacy and defamation action in Dublin, where model Laura Bermingham sued them for printing a topless photo of her that was taken from an illicitly recorded tape. Charming, a video camera had been hidden backstage at a fashion show without the model's knowledge, and Rommel's rag was tacky enough to publish the pix. A costly error: the case was settled for £90,000 plus costs before it went to court.

The incident recalls Rommel's own prodigious efforts to keep his relationship with Countess Sophie, former Deb of the Year, out of the popular prints. And it would be quite wrong for any journalist to report that she now acts as hostess at Monty's gracious St John's Wood dinner parties. And it would be even more reprehensible to report that at one recent dinner party the guests included the Marquesa, Carlton boss David Green, former Sun editor Kelvin Mackenzie and Asda chief turned Tory MP Archie Norman.

PS: Soon after our lovely dinner, as the Tory leadership campaign reached its dizzy anti-climax, Monty's *Mirror* came out in favour of Mr Norman, the obscure new backbencher, declaring on its front page: IT ASDA BE ARCHIE. A classic "Rommel" master-stroke!

HALLO! SPICE may be the, er, spice of life, but Marquesa Spice is upset to learn that two of our most fashionable restaurateurs are at loggerheads over the monopoly of this absurd expression.

Michael Gottlieb, owner of Smolensky's and Cafe Spice, tried to take out an injunction against Amin Ali, owner of Soho's posh Red Fort (where the Spice Girls graze), who has recently opened up Cafe Spice.

Gottlieb failed and had to cough up £19,000 of his rival's costs. Why such excitement over such a silly name? Because both geniuses want to launch nationwide "Spice" chains. Brilliant, eh?

HAGUE'S NEW FIANCÉE



HALLO! DEAR David Mellor, former Conservative member for Putney and Radio 5's noted soccer pundit, has lost none of his sensitive touch, despite the post-traumatic stress of being ejected so forcibly from his seat. For example, when he was invited at the beginning of the year to be star speaker at a conference on football and the media organised by the London School of Economics, of course he accepted with alacrity. And when in April, three months later, he realised that the date of the conference, 3 June, was not entirely convenient, he considerably suggested that the whole event be rescheduled to accommodate him, which it duly was. And finally, a full week before he was due to appear, he personally arranged for one of the functionaries at his Savile Row offices to make a quick phone call to the LSE explaining that actually David wouldn't be able to come...

HALLO! THE Princess of Wales, I confidently predict, will soon be making a sensational transfer from her very own in-house journal, *Hello!*

Diana's agent (aka Richard Kay, "royal correspondent" of the *Daily Mail*), has had a top secret lunch with lovely *OK!* editor, Sharon Ring. Rather dimly, however, he chose Joe Allen's in Covent Garden, the favoured media haunt.

As Kay made his way to Shar's table, he passed no fewer than five tables occupied by senior hacks, including former editor Sir Nicholas Lloyd, the *Express* gossip columnist and even *Daily Star* editor Phil Walker (aka Mr Sharon Ring). As each greeted Diana's chum, he went white, red, then puce with embarrassment.

Nevertheless, expect lots more gushing cover stories (Diana, woman of contradictions, etc), ok?

'The Marquesa'



Tamara Beckwith is the archetypal society blonde. She's as blonde as flashbulbs, as blonde as centre table as Nobu. Tamara is as blonde as an expensive good time, a night time blonde. The pale-streaked chignon is the urban party accessory. Real time, Tamara is fantastically ambitious, frighteningly organised, cuttlingly sharp, well informed — and a model mother who arranges the fishfingers and beans into pictures on the plate.

A.A. GILL
Esquire

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.



IN THE TEAROOM

JUST when that fateful Thursday of the final round of the Tory leadership election was beginning to look like a performance of Hamlet without the prince, who should turn up at the Commons but Michael Portillo himself. At that time the lad Hague looked like a merely ersatz right-winger, so was the former defence secretary there simply to underline the irony that though the eurosceptic right had a majority of the votes, they had carelessly ditched all their candidates?

No. He was there to canvass for young William among the rump of undecided former Redwood voters. Baroness Thatcher too made a similar intervention — something that has been attributed to the persuasive charm of Hague's buddy, Alan Duncan. In fact Duncan has no persuasive charm (except when it comes to getting old men to sell him their council flats), and Maggie's gesture of support was co-ordinated with Portillo's. Between them they accounted for twelve "switchers", which was decisive in settling the result.

What happens next is supposed to run roughly thus: Cecil Parkinson transforms Central Office into a plausible election-fighting machine but upsets the local associations by stealing their money for his national membership scheme. Portillo, by then the darling of the party in the country, sweeps in as party chairman in a year or so's time. The shadow cabinet is packed with failed right-wingers who have no one else to turn to when Hague turns out to be a wrong 'un after all. (*Is all this plotting never going to stop?* — Ed.) No, it isn't. Unity is bunk.

'Urquhart'

LABOUR's election candidate for Uxbridge David Williams helped ensure a 13 percent swing from the Conservatives and came within a whisker of unseating Sir Michael Shersby — who days after the election had been declared unseated himself by passing away.

So Labour's by-election candidate is bound to be David Williams, the candidate who so nearly made it only a few weeks ago, right? Er, wrong. Mr Williams, despite being a popular local who secured eight nominations to all the other contenders' one or two, is not sufficiently "new" Labour and has been unceremoniously dropped by the party's NEC by-election panel.

By chance the chair of this panel — Richard Rosser, the clapped out general secretary of the TSSA rail union — is also a member of Uxbridge Labour party, and his branch's favoured candidate, dreary Blairite Andrew Slaughter, has been duly selected.

TOAST OF THE TORIES

I've bitten off more than I can chew

You'll be eaten for breakfast



LABOUR deputy chief whip George Mudie has been torn off a strip for failing to prevent an embarrassing early-day motion being tabled by 30 Labour MPs calling for the ridiculous Millennium Dome to be scrapped on the grounds that it is a waste of money.

Under rules adopted by the parliamentary Labour party (PLP) last week, all early-day motions must be referred to the whips' office for "vetting" — to give Labour's high command a 24-hour period in which to nobble the perpetrators of awkward motions.

Tragically, the dunderheaded Mudie appeared completely unaware that any controversy was attached to the dome motion and was blissfully ignorant that Sir Richard Rogers' old pal Peter Mandelson, and the prime minister, were determined the once doomed dome should go ahead.

In a snub to heritage secretary Chris Smith, Tony Blair then promptly handed responsibility for the Millennium Exhibition to Mandelson, minister without portfolio and the only minister who remains unaccountable even at the despatch box. Still, if it all does go pear shaped and Mandy won't take the rap, everyone knows where the buck will have to stop.

ALISTAIR Darling, chief secretary to the treasury, was obediently tough in defending the government's tight-fisted policy on expenditure when he was asked in the Commons on 11 June to rule out cuts in free prescriptions. He was not going to walk into that trap. He said: "We have made it clear all aspects have to be examined. It would be quite wrong to exclude prescription charges."

Two days later, Frank Dobson, health secretary, was equally obedient and also refused to rule out raising cash through new charges for patients, including prescription charges for pensioners. But this time the storm broke.

Lobby correspondents reported that: "Ministers were furious with the secretary of state for health for a gaffe..." "Questions were being asked around Whitehall about his long-term future..." "Downing Street ordered an inquest into Mr Dobson's remarks."

But why was there no such reaction to Mr Darling? Because he is one of the Magic Circle around Tony Blair. These are the trustees destined to go ever upwards with their leader. Dobson is not of that order. So the people giving non-attributable briefings "around Whitehall" and in Downing Street give contrasting responses to identical cases concerning different people.

THE "Think Twice" campaign against devolution in Scotland seems doomed before it is even off the ground — especially if the track record of its founder, Brian Montieth, is anything to go by.

Formerly a leading member of the barmy Federation of Conservative Students, Montieth seized the helm of the opposition to home rule following the total annihilation of Tory MPs north of the border. The chubby PR consultant and would-be politician is backed by such Tory luminaries as Glasgow Rangers vice-chairman Donald Findlay QC and industrialist Dan Wright in the campaign to make Scots think twice about voting "Yes" in the forthcoming referendum.

But it was creditors of Montieth's former PR company, Leith Communications, who were left wishing they had thought twice after dealing with the former would-be Tory MP. Despite being given a lucrative contract by Scottish Tory central office and handling the publication of *Conservative News*, edited by the late Sir Nicky Fairbairn, Montieth's company still managed to go bust in 1991 leaving a UK-wide trail of debts and scores of angry businessmen, some owed four-figure sums.

The good news is that Montieth is now back in business as, er, a PR consultant.

PAYBACK TIME

GERRY ROBINSON, one of the several tycoons who appeared in "Millionaires for Labour", may soon have cause for celebration.

Robinson, chief executive of the Granada Group, which owns Granada TV and London Weekend, is in merger talks with Labour peer Lord Hollick, whose United News and Media owns

THE NEW BOYS: 3

John Bercow

WILL the career of ambitious John Bercow, the new Tory MP for Buckingham, be blighted by his appearance on television supporting his friend and former employer, Jonathan "Liar" Aitken?



Bercow, who was a special adviser to Aitken, still hopes to get in the opposition team despite this unsavoury connection and despite his support for John Redwood in the

leadership election (if Iain Duncan-Smith gets a job, why shouldn't he?) But a look at Bercow's past reveals that he has other interesting qualities that might not yet have come to Hague's attention yet.

Twelve years ago at conference, Norman Tebbit, then party chairman, said how much he was looking forward to the day when "young John speaks to conference as the chancellor of the exchequer". That was at a time when Bercow was a Lambeth councillor and chair of the barmy Federation of Conservative Students. His major achievements then included the authorship of "The John Bercow Guide to Understanding Women", which featured in *Armageddon* magazine, a young Tory publication.

His enlightening guide is divided into five categories: How to pick up drunk girls; how to pick up virgins; how to pick up refined girls; how to get rid of a girl during sex; and how to get rid of a girl after sex.

Avid readers were informed that "women will settle for anything that breathes and has a credit card". Advice on what to say to drunk girls includes: "If you're free later maybe we could go back to your place and name your breasts." On virgins: "Lying is good. The truth is bad" — and this before he had even worked for Mr Aitken. He continued thoughtfully: "There is nothing more dangerous than an armed, hysterical virgin."

The need to get rid of girls during sex can happen for a variety of reasons, according to Bercow. For example, "she won't make sounds like a squirrel, even though you've offered her money".

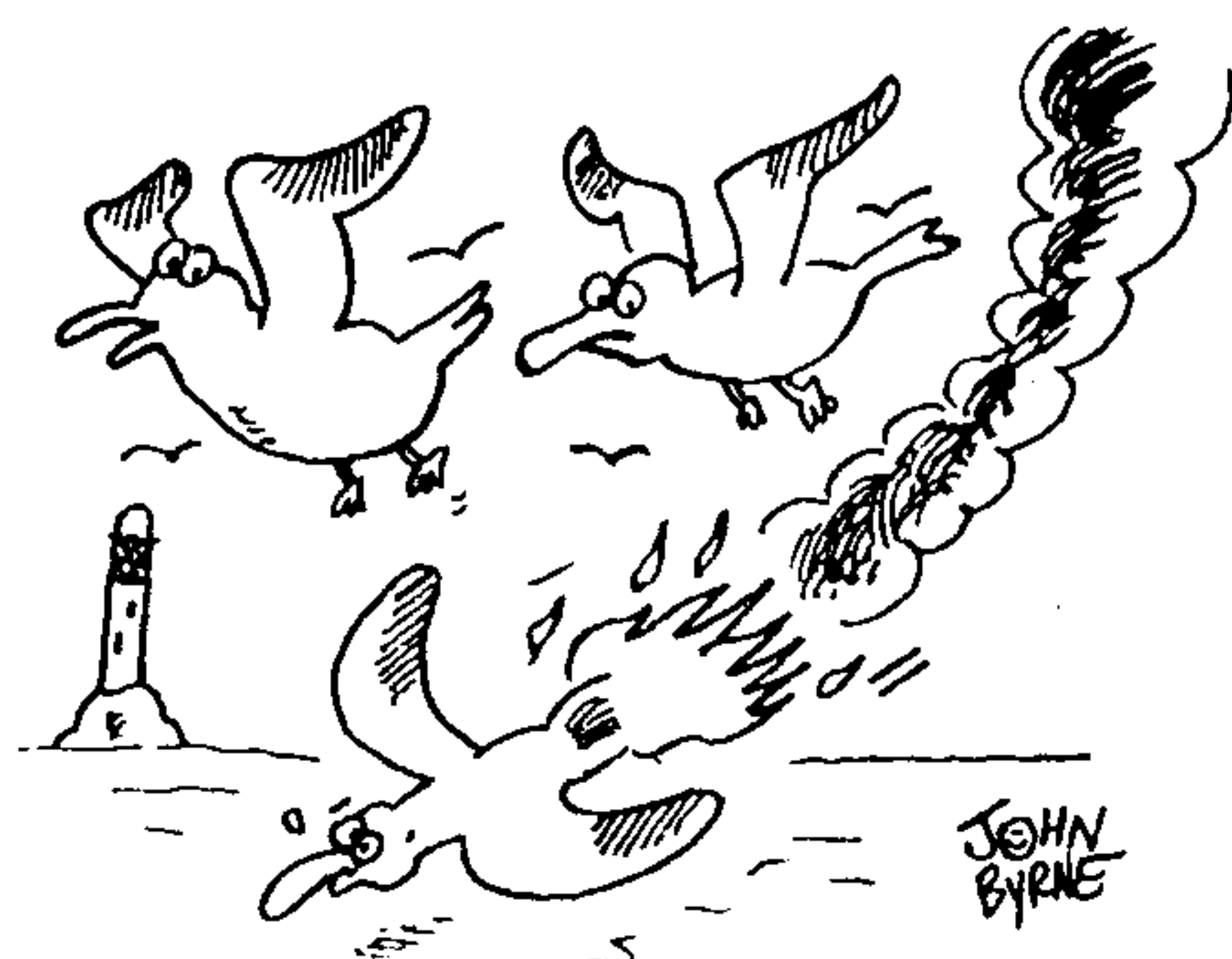
The hon member's guide to getting rid of a girl after sex is to say: "Warning, don't move, I've just broken a test tube filled with the AIDS virus" or the even more refined: "I hate your tits". Bercow is obviously destined for high office.

Anglia TV, Meridian TV, Express Newspapers and much else besides.

Normally, such a potential concentration of ownership would be automatically referred to the monopolies and mergers commission by Margaret Beckett, president of the board of trade. "But," according to the *Financial Mail on Sunday*, "she could nod it through." The *Mail* adds that Robinson and Hollick "are believed to have taken political soundings from the government".

Hollick is particularly well placed to do so: he was recently appointed "special adviser" to Margaret Beckett, president of the board of trade.

'Backbiter'



"It's Jonathan Aitken Seagull..."

NOOKS and CORNERS

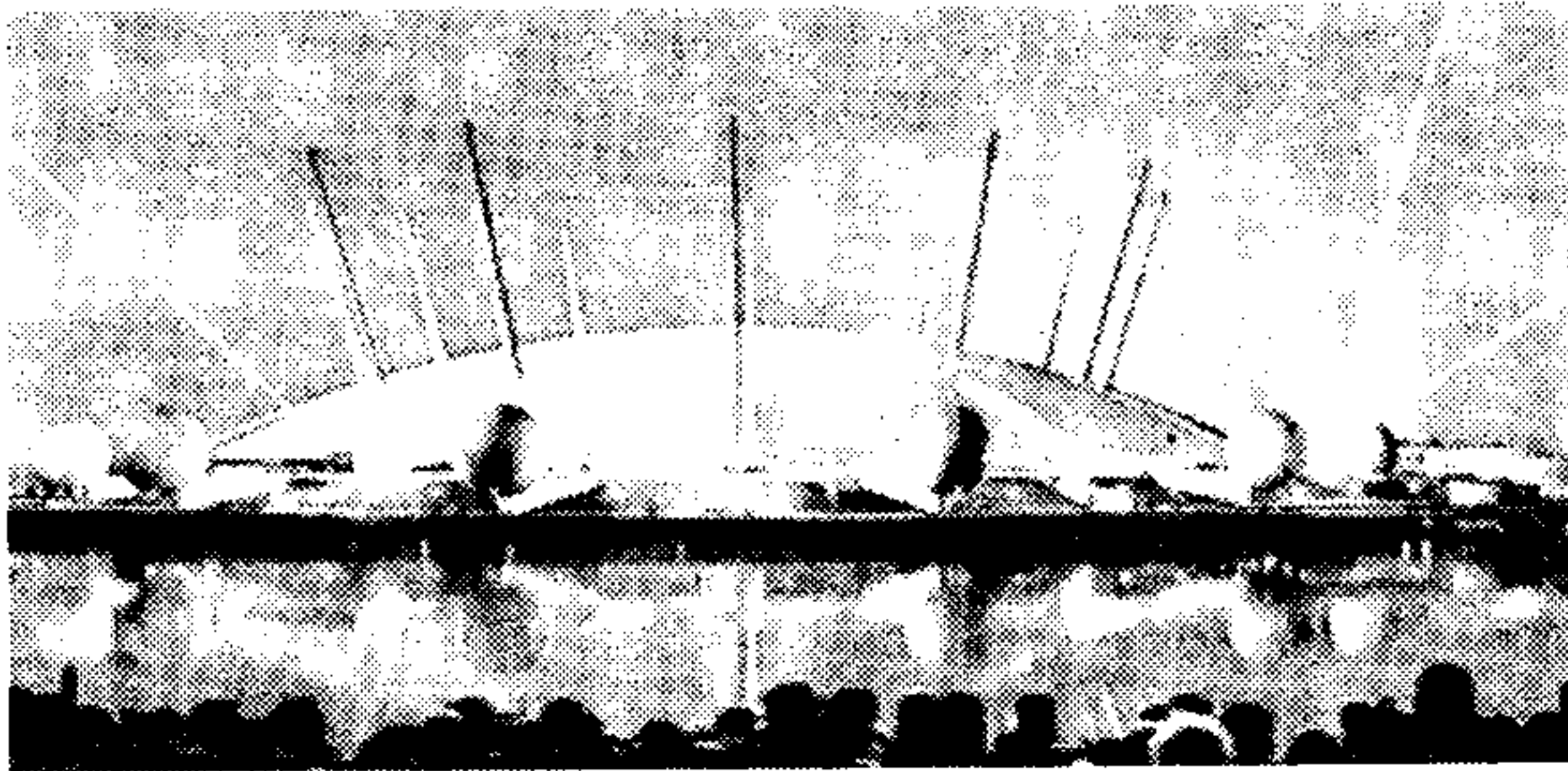
IT IS not often this column has a good word to say about Sir Jocelyn Stevens KVO, the egregious chairman of English Heritage. In fact, this column has *never* had a good word to say about Sir Jocelyn Stevens... Until now. Credit where credit is due: Ol' Piranha Teeth has made it a priority of his rule in Fortress House to do something about Stonehenge.

Now Stonehenge may seem rather old hat, even a bit boring and something we all take for granted — it's only archaeology, rather than architecture, after all. But it is undeniably *important*. In fact it is the most important assembly of big old stones, the most important prehistoric site, in Europe. And it is, for what it is worth, a world heritage site.

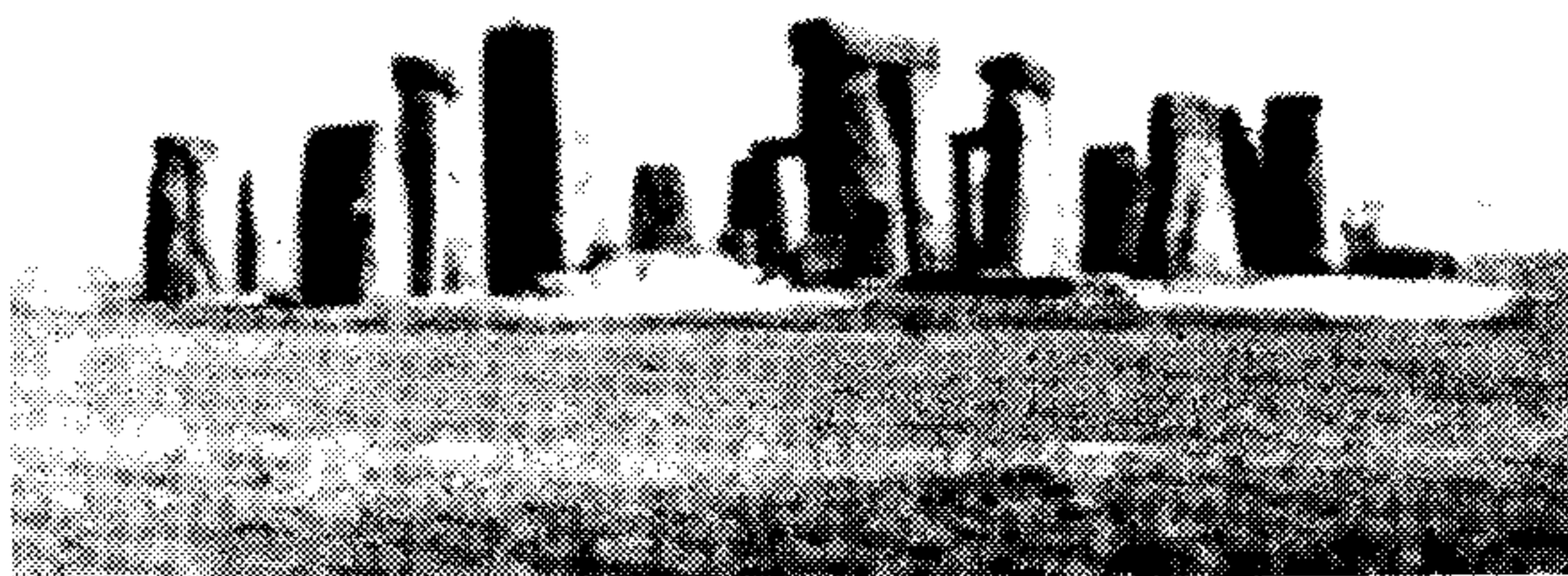
People come to Britain to see Stonehenge. And what they see — the monument fenced off, with a car park, "visitor centre" and roaring main road just next door — is what the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) described in 1992 as "a national disgrace". (It is also a national disgrace, of course, that every summer the armed might of the British state is deployed to prevent a handful of time-warped dropouts worshipping whatever they worship around the stones, but let that pass.)

So English Heritage has been working for years on successive schemes to move the roads and the car park and visitor centre far away from Stonehenge itself, leaving the stones in splendid isolation. This seems to me A Good Idea. And the latest scheme, encouraged by the last government, involved a private finance initiative with the Tus-saids Group which would have built and run the wretched interpretation centre. But our new masters did not like this element, we must presume, as last week the millennium commission rejected English Heritage's bid for £22m of lottery money to do something about Stonehenge.

Is this a scandal? It surely is when the millennium commission has been persisting with its scheme for an exhibition at Greenwich — something which practically nobody wants and nobody



Money for this...



But not this?

can say what it is for. Moreover, to appoint as "creative director" Stephen Bayley, the smooth, linen-suited former minion of Sir Terence Conran, a man who once modestly described himself as "a socialist do-gooding Utopian aesthete who wants the world to be a wiser and more efficient place — I should have been Cardinal Newman", is surely an act of desperation.

The cost of the Millennium Exhibition is £600m and rising — a figure which makes the cost of the Stonehenge project seem peanuts. And, as I have pointed out before, the Greenwich project is sucking money away from other Millennium projects — both good and bad — all over Britain. So it seems even the new Labour government is worried about

the project. But at a recent cabinet meeting, Peter Mandelson persuaded his colleagues to wait a while before cancelling the project. And now Tony Blair has backed it.

Why are they so keen on the Greenwich exhibition? Mr Mandelson is, of course, like the prime minister, very fond of dining at the River Café, the hugely expensive, simperingly egalitarian Italian restaurant in Hammersmith where fashionable people like Stephen Bayley can be seen at other tables. And the River Café (with its new cook book, promoted in *every* newspaper with glowing profiles of its co-author) is of course run by their dear friend Ruthie Rogers. Ruthie, who sent Tony a River Café hamper full of dinner when he was elected in case the poor dear forgot to eat, is also known as Lady Rogers, the American wife of My Lord Rogers of Riverside, that quintessential "new" Labour peer. Yes, none other than the architect formerly known as Richard Rogers, whose firm just happens to be the overall designers of the great plastic dome which will house the £600m bonanza at Greenwich, as well as the masterplanners of the South Bank Arts Centre and a lot of other thoroughly worthwhile big projects besides.

Nothing wrong with that, of course. Lord Rogers, being the great designer and visionary that we read he is, naturally thinks the £600m dome at Greenwich is a very good idea and, of course, tells important people who admire him, like Mr Mandelson and Mr Blair, that the government is right to back it. Never mind that it is big, round and empty, not at all "forward-looking" and rather inferior to the 1951 Dome of Discovery — London *needs* another masterpiece by Richard Rogers, after all. Such is the way that modern, go-ahead, "new" Labour Britain will increasingly operate, with decisions made, not in the stuffy Gothic corridors of Westminster, but in the exciting, fresh, olive-oil-scented spaces of the River Café. Don't give up the fight, Sir Jocelyn.

'Piloti'

CHARITY NEWS

THE National Trust has infuriated a small semi-rural community in Wales over its plans to sell off land given to it by its late owner, Muriel Stott, 27 years ago.

Parciau Farm in Old Colwyn has been a working farm since 1740. It comprises nearly 100 acres of green pasture, two 100-year-old barns and some equally old hedgerow and, says the trust, has never been run at a loss. Now, however, it will be sold to developers for a 250-property housing estate and the money it raises will fund repairs to stately homes.

When furious locals asked to see Miss Stott's will to see if it precluded the land's development, the National Trust refused to show the letters of written limitation, insisting they are "confidential". But the trust also insists Miss Stott thought it "highly likely" that the land would be sold. A spokesperson told the *Eye*: "We were given the land as alienable land, in other words Miss Stott knew it was investment land that would probably be developed."

Even so, the trust's defiance of local people is curious. Its director-general Angus Stirling recently detailed the trust's objectives as "constantly improving, through research and study, our knowledge of what makes the countryside special... closely tied to these purposes is the trust's social responsibility: its duty to consider the interests of its neighbours, the communities it seeks to serve and those who use the land it owns".

have now decided that it is a success story.

One of the most laughable stories Hyder has successfully promoted is that its Welsh Water division is efficient because its reservoirs are full — in stark contrast to English counterparts who face a drought this summer.

This is despite the fact that leaks from Welsh Water's mains have risen from 33 percent to 38 percent since privatisation. So what is the secret of its success?

According to the BBC Wales current affairs programme *Week In, Week Out* (aka *Weak In, Weak Out*), Welsh Water has an incredibly efficient leaks control system. The real reason — that Wales has twice the rainfall of England — seems to have escaped the notice of the local media.

Moreover, the day after Welsh Water chalked up another record — its 50th criminal conviction since privatisation, for polluting the River Dee — its chairman Brian Charles was awarded an OBE in the queen's birthday honours list for services to... the water industry!

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

MORE from Southgate College where 45 lecturers received their marching orders from principal Michael Blagden a month ago.

Shortly after their dismissal notices, lecturers also received the staff bulletin and were heartened to see it contained plans for a new extension to college buildings. The artist's impression showed a gleaming glass structure housing a new gymnasium and library/admissions unit costing £800,000.

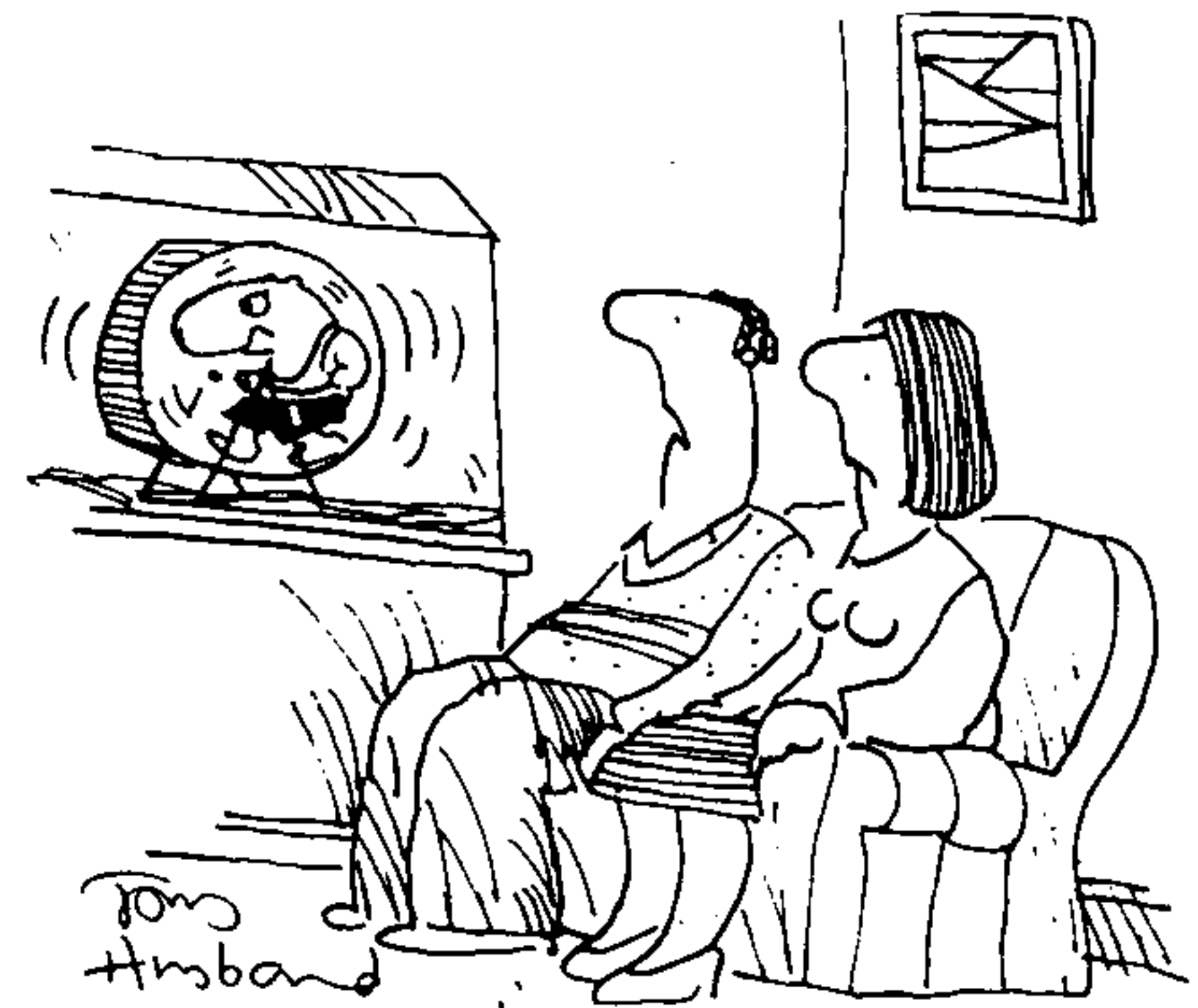
These new construction plans follow another extravagant development by Blagden of a management unit separate to the normal college buildings, aptly named *The Mansion*.

Staff who are sacked for refusing to accept new contracts (of longer working days and fewer

holidays) will be delighted by the prestigious new plans. But not as delighted as their £80,000-a-year principal, Michael Blagden. His letter to the last *Eye* protesting that he is only following orders in sacking lecturers has provoked some comment (see letters page).

According to David Evans, a working lecturer and general-secretary of the new Lecturers Employment Advice and Action Fellowship, Blagden's dig at the length of lecturer's holidays is hardly fair. He points out that lecturers are only paid for the weeks they work, and that pay is spread across the year in 12 monthly instalments for administrative convenience.

Blagden has bet with Evans that he will not be able to demonstrate in a forthcoming court case (over lecturers being forced on to new contracts at Havering College) that the changes to contracts are linked with the college's incorporation (ie privatisation). The fact that he is only prepared to wager £5 could be an indication of the strength of his confidence.



"He's very intense for a hamster, isn't he?"

WATERWORLD

AS HYDER celebrates record profits of £208.2m, it appears to have cracked its public relations problems with the local media who

Eye TV

Into The Unknown
(ITV)

Banged Up Season
(Channel 4)

Hearty Facts Season
(Channel 4)

SOME summer and society types do *The Season*. Meanwhile, telly types do *The Seasons*. It was Botney — when at BBC2 — who was the first exec to realise that the best way of dealing with a stack of crappy programmes unlikely to make much impact individually was to lash them together and float them as a Theme Night or Season. This lesson in creative thrift has been learned too well. These days, the phrase the Four Seasons doesn't first bring to mind Vivaldi; it makes you think of the terrestrial TV schedule in any given week.

This week, for example, ITV is hosting *Into The Unknown*, a theme week of films and documentaries based around alien invasion, levitation and other pre-millennial nonsense. Over on Channel 4, there are two umbrella collections of stuff running simultaneously: *Banged Up*, a medley of scheduling on the subject of crime and punishment, and *Hearty Facts*, a set of four films on consecutive nights on cardiac matters.

Ten years ago, ITV's senior executives would have locked themselves in their offices with a pearl-handled revolver if they discovered they had commissioned something as terrible as *Predictions*, a gormless special

hosted by Phillip Schofield in which a studio audience was invited to whoop as various crystal-ball gazers and tarot readers were tested in June against sealed predictions made in January. All of them got the election result wrong and missed out on the major footballing predictions but were cheered for such efforts of prophecy as "Princess Diana will have a new man in her life this year". Nostradamus or what?

Yet not only do today's third channel barons not put a bullet in their head on viewing this dismal stuff; they now make it the gateway to a whole week of related bollocks. Other scarcely credible apparitions in the *Into The Unknown* season include *We Are Not Alone*, a two-hour documentary about the "history" (yeah, yeah) of alien abductions, insultingly scheduled in what used to be the distinguished *First Tuesday* slot. The whole disastrous farrago culminates in *Strange But True?*, a "live debate" — modelled on the monarchy brawl which brought ITV into disrepute earlier this year — "to decide if UFOs really have landed on earth".

The fact — and in this context it's good finally to welcome one — that 90 minutes of ITV peak-time could be devoted to this "question" means that there is no need at all to conduct a debate about whether the third channel has succumbed to a terminal dumbing-down process. How can once-serious broadcasters turn over a whole week's schedule to a "phenomenon" for which there exists no evidence whatsoever.

You might think that if ITV were really cynical, it would mount a season about sex. But sex is controversial: it might deter some mainstream advertisers and risks upsetting the regulators. So the commercial boys have been really cunning. The paranormal is to the moral majority what sex is to the normal — a subject guaranteed to bring them sweating and quivering to the screen — while bringing no condemnations

from the *Daily Mail*, which has just serialised the latest hand-book of the strange-but-true nerd: a ludicrous work called *The Bible Code*, which argues that scripture predicted the whole of human history.

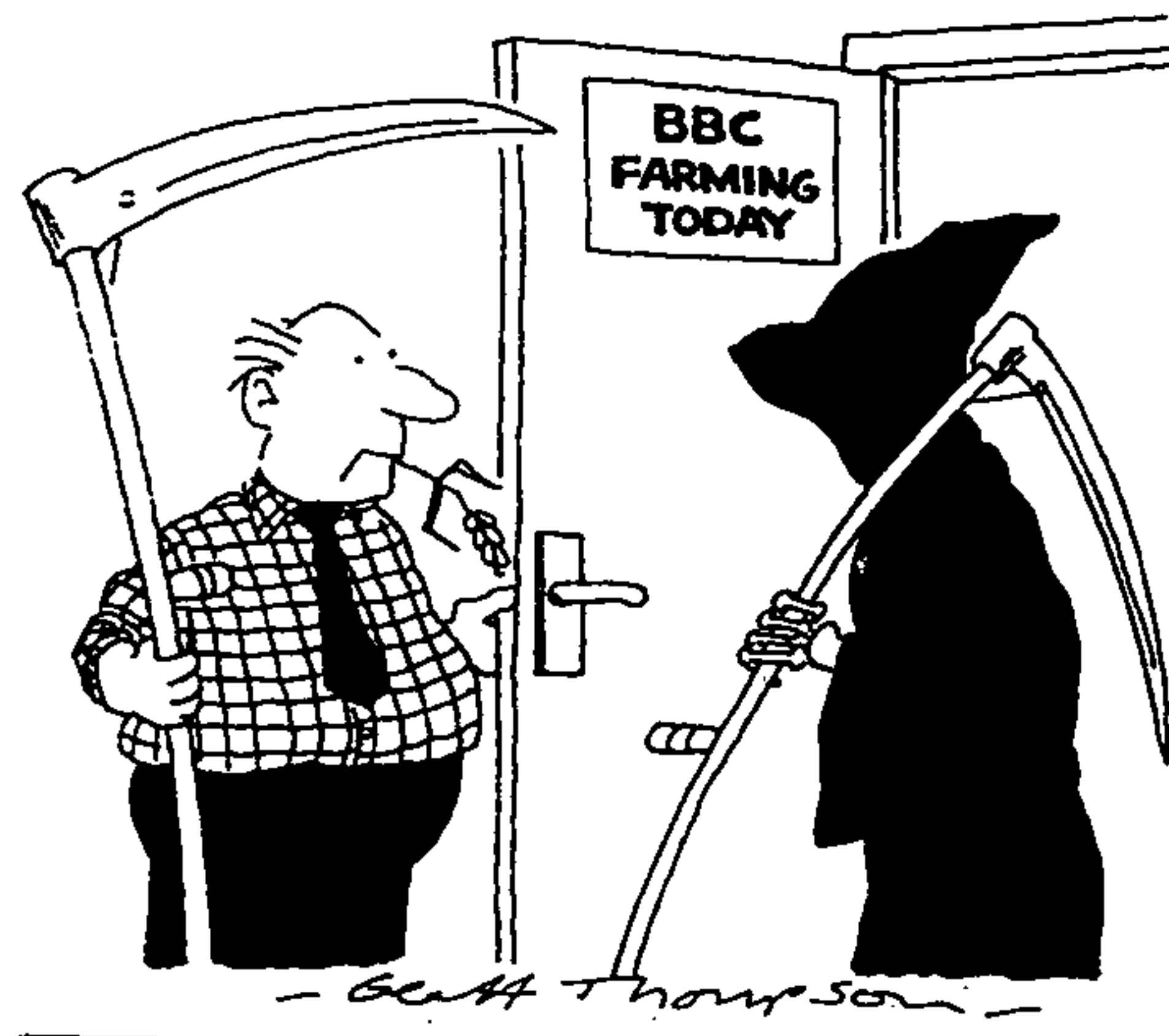
Over at Channel 4, most seasons have been unashamedly about sex: for example, the *Red Light Zone*, a soft-porn festival which began the *Daily Mail*'s moralistic assaults on the just-departed Michael Grade. As its come-on title suggests, *Banged Up*, though technically a series about imprisonment, reliably homes in on the most prurient aspects of punitive confinement. *Barred Love* — a one-hour documentary — invited in-mates to come clean about "how they cope with the absence of wives, girlfriends and women". In other words, the bending over in the showers for the soap joke extended into a supposedly serious documentary.

When television seasons began, on Botney's BBC2, the rationale for them was that they offered safety in numbers for shows — on difficult or minority subjects — which might otherwise struggle to find a place in the schedules. But now — ITV's paranormal season being a fine example — they are frequently employed with the opposite aim: to justify even greater numbers of trashy programmes in one week. As Kenneth Clarke and John Redwood discovered in another context, people see through cynical coalitions and the majority of seasons now are tactical collaborations between cheesy docs, repeated sit-coms and old movies which simply do not belong together. It's time for an end-of-season sale on television.

'Square Eyes'

Blue blues:
Rotherham Council
has approved plans
to convert the former
Conservative Club into a
unit for the mentally ill

Grauniad



MEDIA NEWS

BIRTIST "market" reforms at the BBC which have threatened the future of the corporation's important music library (see last *Eye*) are now putting the reference library in jeopardy, too.

The TV Centre library was previously a free service, but a year ago departments were told they must pay £27 for each book borrowed — regardless of whether it was a paperback worth a fiver.

Despite the excellence of the library and the skill of its staff, it simply didn't make sense for departments to use it any more. As with the direct purchase of music CDs, so it became much more cost effective to buy books outside or use a public library.

Now the library is expected to suffer similar cuts to its musical sister. Why didn't the reformers consider the cost of having employees traipse round the capital looking for books already in their own office building? Presumably that wouldn't have been Birtist enough.

I-BSkyB

Terry Wogan is absolutely unflappable on the Lottery show. Which is more than you can say for his ears. Tel's lugholes are so huge they can hear sign language.

If he looks distant, he's not day-dreaming. It's just those ears of his picking up Sky.

GARRY BUSHELL
Sun

READERS of the *Glasgow Herald* may have been puzzled by the enormous space afforded on 14 June to a feature, "Reflections on Betrayal", by Scottish film chief Alan Shiach.

"I was betrayed recently," it starts (a reference no doubt to the complaints about Shiach made to the secretary of state for Scotland by the former director of the Scottish Film Council — see *Eye* 926).

The *Herald* is renowned for its integrity, and so the inordinate space devoted to this self-pitying drivel can have nothing to do with the fact that Shiach sits on the *Herald* board.



HACKWATCH SPECIAL

LEADER WRITING



THE real losers in the recent leadership contest were the tattered remnants of the Tory press. While lambasting the hypocrisy, dishonesty and confusion of Conservative MPs, right-wing hacks and editors quite failed to notice that they themselves are in the same boat — not waving, but drowning.

The Daily Telegraph

4 June. Boris Johnson offers his expert prognosis: "It is possible that a week today, the Tory party may have taken the first step towards electing Kenneth Clarke as its leader... There seems a possibility that the Right will fail to get its act together, so that two of Howard, Lilley, Redwood, and perhaps all three, go on into the second ballot."

9 June. A *Daily Telegraph* editorial backs Peter Lilley and explains why William Hague won't do: "One is bound to ask why exactly he is the answer to Tory prayers. Where are the ideas and achievements? He seems to be a blank slate on which many others seek to write."

16 June. Now that Lilley has dropped out and rallied behind Hague, the *Telegraph* switches allegiance to John Redwood. "Mr Redwood may not be everyone's cup of tea, but he has the uncomfortable merit of being right." As for William Hague, "his appeal is that he does not offend and can therefore unite. One must question the 'therefore' in that sentence. The same means of offering unity was offered by Mr Major, and it failed. Mr Hague is extremely intelligent, and will certainly have learnt from the past seven years, but the reasons for voting for him, real though they are, are second-order reasons..."

20 June. The inoffensive second-order candidate has been elected. "This could be the end of the nightmare," the *Telegraph* rejoices. "Mr Hague will reform the party, reconnect it with its roots and provide people with reasons to join it once more... Under William Hague, the Tories can win the next election."

The Sunday Telegraph

8 June. Political pundit Paul Goodman marks our card for the first ballot. "John Redwood could just escape last place, but it is unlikely... It seems that Mr Howard's seniority, skills and persistence are paying off. He has a sporting chance of outstripping Mr Hague in the second ballot and facing Mr Clarke in the final — if, that is, the latter's supporters do not drift to Mr Hague in the second round. My best guess is that Mr Hague would have to work very hard to get enough Right-wing votes to beat Mr Clarke in a final ballot..."

THE EXPRESS

12 May. "Mr Hague is largely unknown outside Westminster," an *Express* editorial notes sniffily. "Service in the Welsh Office is not really preparation for high authority."

9 June. The *Express* comes out for Michael Howard. "Mr William Hague lacks Mr Redwood's sharp edge," it adds. "This might recommend him as a unifier were it not for nagging suspicions that his emollient stems from a lack of any edge whatsoever..."

15 June. Under a gloomy headline ("The seeds of defeat in Hague's victory"), political columnist Peter Osborne argues that William Hague is likely to go down in history as "just another failed and forgotten politician. For the odds against him succeeding are formidable. He may be the unity candidate, but the Left and Right will work mercilessly against him — just as they did against John Major."

16 June. One day on, the same Peter Osborne suddenly claims that "only William Hague is capable of keeping the Tory Party united and welding it into the fighting force that British democracy so badly needs... He is a politician of the highest quality... Mr Hague could yet save the Tory Party from disintegration."

21 June. Hague has triumphed. Forgetting its rude remarks in earlier editorials, the *Express* belatedly decides that he was the ideal man for the job. "The public had given the clearest indication that it was in a mood for change. The Tories accepted the logic of that mood and turned their backs on the generation that has so mismanaged the leadership of the party during the past five years." What — including the *Express's* beloved Michael Howard?

Daily Mail

13 May. "It is hard to know whether to shudder in disbelief or shake with mirth at the gothic horrors which threaten to engulf the sad battle for the Tory succession... As it is, still bitter, grieving and in deep shock after their humiliating defeat, they need this destructive leadership contest like they need a stake through the heart."

23 May. "Whoever finally emerges from this miserable exercise cannot claim to be a national leader. He will have no mandate..."

20 June. "Mr Hague's emphatic victory offers an opportunity to start rebuilding the party... Mr Hague is more than young enough to offer the Tories a new start. There is a freshness about the man..."

The Mail

8 June. An editorial pins its hopes on a concerted effort by Messrs Howard, Lilley and Redwood. "Divisions and splits would only play into the hands of Mr Clarke or Mr Hague. Considerable bitterness would follow... A win for Mr Clarke would be the wrong choice... William Hague seems to be attracting some support and may even come second in the first ballot. But he, too, is no answer. Inexperience counts against him."

22 June. The paper salutes Hague's victory. "He has clear skills, the main one being the ability to organise and manage, not just MPs, but the party in the country. He also has enthusiasm, and as far as we can tell so far, political grip."

THE TIMES

6 May. "William Hague has shown himself adept at avoiding controversy and an amiable administrator," a *Times* leader concedes. "But his lack of experience is all too visible to his colleagues and the country alike..."

5 June. Chief pundit Peter Riddell previews the first round. "It is likely that the candidate coming fifth next Tuesday, probably John Redwood, will drop out, but there is no reason why the one in fourth place should do so... If the second or third-place candidates do less well than expected, the fourth place one — say, Michael Howard — may calculate, or at any rate claim, that he will pick up votes on the second round and could even move up into second place then... The candidate — say, William Hague — who would be most MPs' second preference might come third in the second round behind Peter Lilley and would therefore be excluded from the run-off..."

6 June. On the last weekend before the first ballot, *The Times* backs Peter Lilley. Endorsing Mr Hague "would be endorsing a position still hazily defined, a politician not yet apprenticed in adversity. We understand the hope of his supporters but hope alone is not enough for a Tory recovery."

18 June. "Mr Hague's relatively disappointing performance [in the second ballot] shows the extent of the doubts about his candidacy... Even if he does win tomorrow, his victory will be a poor, weak thing."

20 June. Poor? Weak? Perish the thought. "The Conservative Party took a first step on the road back to realism last night with the election of William Hague as leader... This morning the Tories have a leader who can stand on a clear and principled position..."

THE SUNDAY TIMES

11 May. A *Sunday Times* editorial examines the leadership candidates, and finds them wanting. "Mr Clarke cannot reunite the Tories without reneging on his core beliefs in Europe and Mr Howard seems to lack vote-winning appeal... William Hague holds promise for the future but the Tories need a saviour now if they are not to disintegrate further."

8 June. "Allowing for the undoubted popularity of Mr Clarke, it would be best of he were to face Mr Howard in the second election. But if Mr Hague comes through strongly, there are suggestions Mr Howard will throw in his lot with Mr Clarke and become deputy leader. They would make a powerful pair... And Mr Hague? His time may come, but not yet." When will it come, then? Sooner than you might think...

15 June. "Mr Hague offers the best prospect of real change from the Tory politics so decisively rejected in the last election... Mr Hague is now best placed to reunite, rebuild and renew the Conservative Party."

LOGO NEWS

PISSED-OFF hacks wondering why on earth the BBC is spending £1.7m of licence-payers' money to come up with yet another "new corporate identity" had a chance this week to see the thinking behind the project.

Under mounting pressure from management to get staff back "on message" about this latest expensive image-tweak, the lavishly remunerated designer of the new logo, Martin Lambie-Nairn provided a "think piece" for *Ariel*, the BBC's in-house magazine — rather conventionally printed in good old Times New Roman type.

The trouble with the previous logo, explains Lambie-Nairn, was that it had dated: "its roots are still traceable to the italicised designs of the 1950s and 60s". No wonder then that it had to be replaced by a "robust and elegant design", created by Eric Gill in, er, the 1930s.

To spell out the full meaning of the new lettering, "guidelines for using the logo will be published in September," according to *Ariel*. Furthermore, "a 12 minute briefing video" has been produced, for those who need a pause button to take it all in. And if that is not enough, "a number of task

groups is looking at its implementation" — 15 of them to be precise. So "if you have any queries about the use of the new logo, the following contacts can help: Communications, Corporate & General Stationery, Equipment and Materials, Finance and Budgeting, Graphics/Literature Communications, Guidelines & Documentation, Information Technology, Legal, Radio Design, Regional Broadcasting, Signage/Environments, TV Design, Vehicle Delivery, World Service, Worldwide/Merchandising".

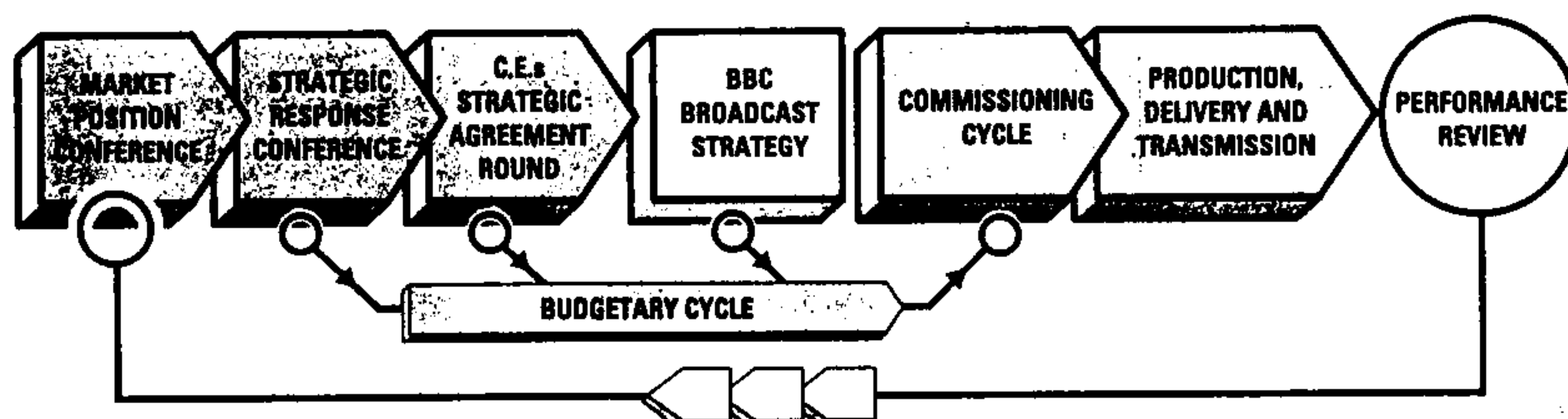
JOB WATCH

POOR Jerry Hayes, ousted as Tory MP for Harlow after a tricky election campaign in which the *News of the Screws* alleged he'd had an affair with a male Commons researcher. Where is he now?

Jerry has signed up for a training course to learn how to be a DJ at his local station, Essex Radio. He will attend a two-day workshop and presentation course to learn about the technical side of radio production.

BIRTSPEAK

FORMING, IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING BBC BROADCAST STRATEGY



from *Broadcast Live!*, an internal BBC publication

DOING THE ROUNDS

Focus on Norwich and Chris Smith

17 March 1997

Dear Ms Carlo,

Thank you for your letters of 13 and 17 March about the future of the Private Finance Initiative proposal for a new hospital in Norwich. As you know, I understand your concern about the loss of the Norfolk and Norwich hospital site and facilities. It is not clear to me that proper consultations have been carried out with the local community, or whether the benefits of the new site will outweigh the disadvantages of losing the present facilities in the centre of the city.

We have had serious concerns about the operation of the Tory (sic) PFI — not least because it has led to needless delays in necessary capital development projects, but also because of the lack of public consultation. We want to make sure the people of Norwich have access to new and better hospital facilities as soon as possible. **But we would rapidly undertake a listening exercise with local people as soon as possible before making any final decisions.** This should not be used as an excuse for delay — as the Tories may claim — but only for ensuring the right decisions have been taken.

I hope this clarifies our position in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
CHRIS SMITH MP.

SO WROTE the former shadow health secretary before he was dumped from office for making unsustainable promises to **Bart's hospital** (*Eyes passim*). Alas, so keen is "new" Labour to prove to the private sector that it can secure partnerships where the Tories failed, that plans for the dubious Tory PFI district general hospital at Colney, South Norfolk, are being forced ahead without a whiff of

the promised public listening exercise.

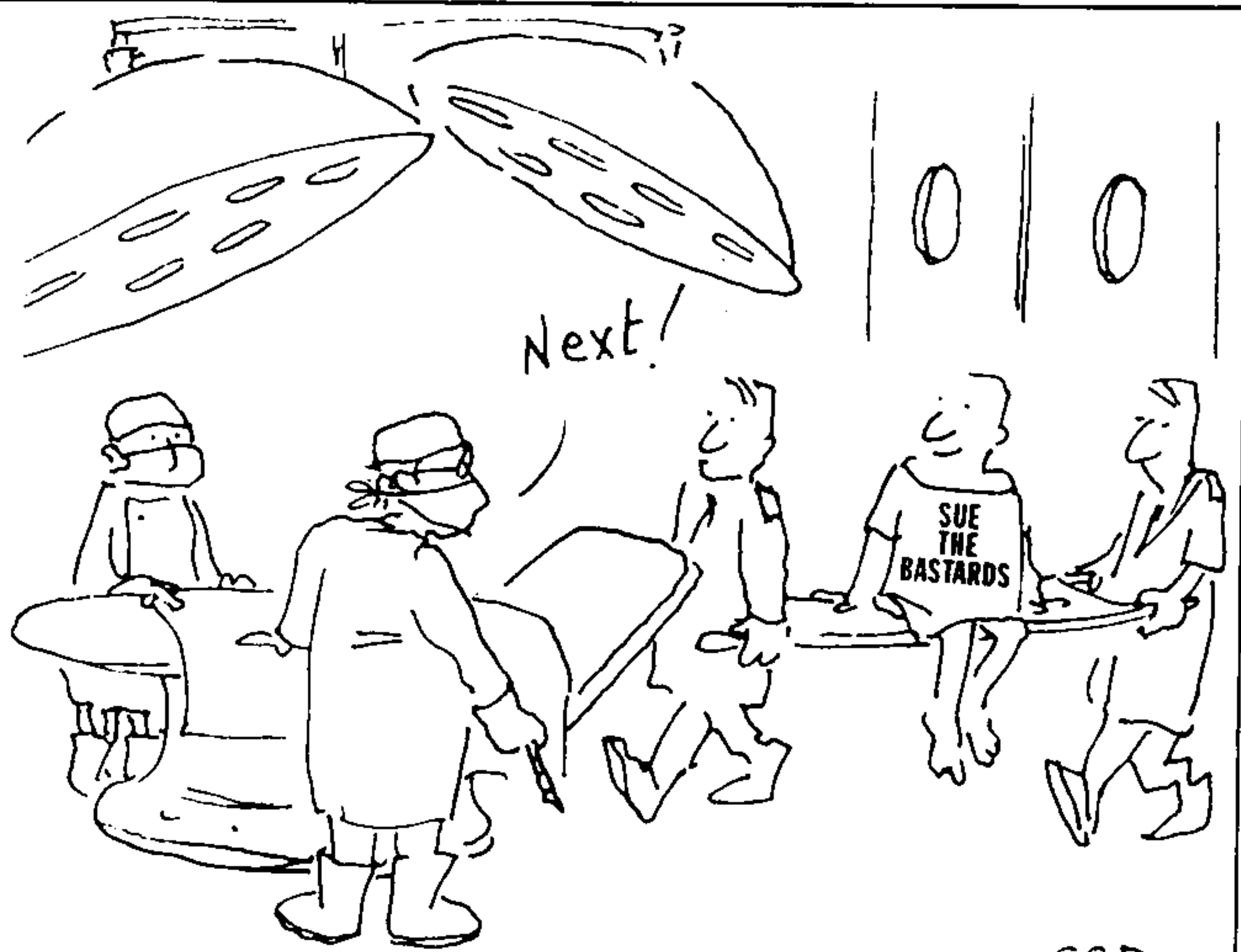
The aim is to replace the 988-bed Norfolk and Norwich hospital — 200 metres from the city centre — and the 219-bed West Norwich hospital with a new 809-bed erection inconveniently on the city's outskirts.

If Labour were to consult the people of Norwich, they would find that 80 percent are opposed to the move. The new site is three miles out of the centre and 40 percent of Norwich households, and 25 percent of Norfolk households, don't have a car. Those on low incomes who live in the city centre and need health care the most will thus be most disadvantaged by the move.

Developing the greenfield site would cause environmental damage and result in increased road use. The new site application proposes the largest car park in the county (2,350 spaces), yet the number of beds would be reduced by a third and the city centre economy would be devastated by the move.

Architect Michael Innes was commissioned to develop a strategy for improving services on the existing site and found that an equivalent provision would cost £100m less, be cheaper to run, more accessible for patients and hospital workers and would support public transport and planning policies. So why move it at all?

Planning approval for the new single site hospital was engineered in 1988 on the back of an application for a second and additional hospital at Colney. Public debate about the impact of the city centre closures — a minimum expectation of planning procedure — has been tactically avoided,



GED

with limited discussions in 1992 and 1996. The Norfolk and Norwich health care trust and local health authorities claim that the redevelopment option for the existing site is unworkable, although this has never been explained or tested in public, and Labour now seems unwilling to do so — despite Mr Smith's pre-election promise.

Trust chief executive Malcolm Stamp told a packed city hall in April that "there have been extensive consultations over Colney. I do not believe it should be revisited." So convincing was he that only six out of 200 voted in favour of the move. True, there are some hospital workers who support it — especially consultants who wish to be closer to the university — but to most it seems that political diktat is triumphing over commonsense, open debate, the will of the people — and once again the will of the elbowed Chris Smith.

M.D.



LUVVIES

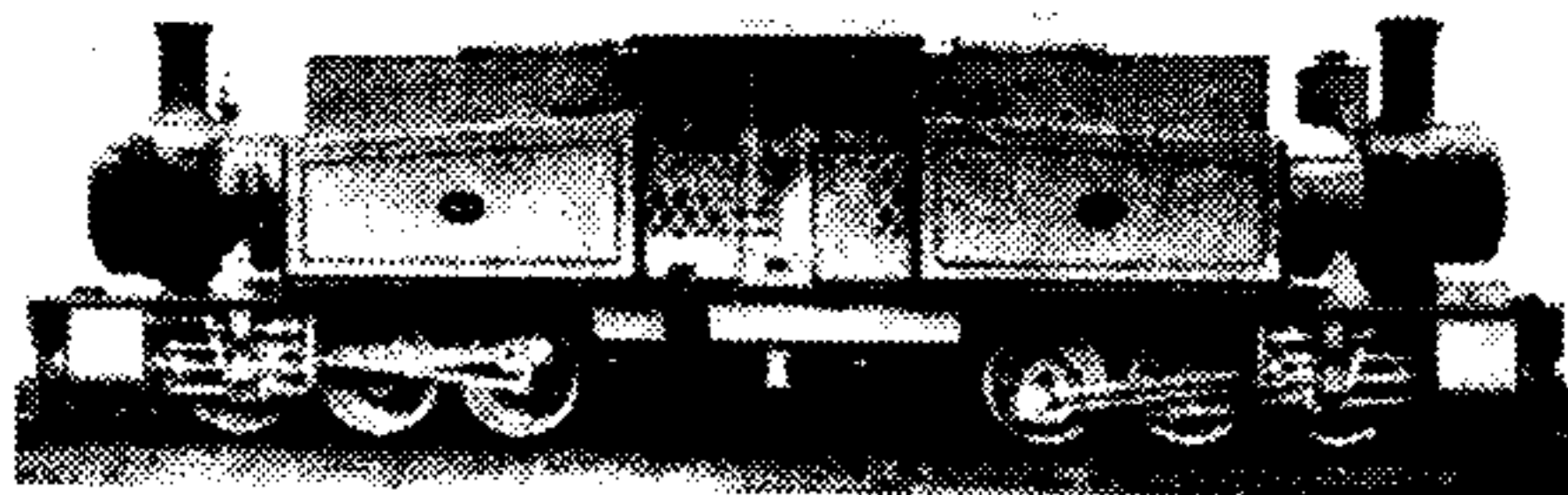
I was fearful of becoming a married man because it made me feel like a statistic. I was fearful that my individuality as an actor would be blurred... I wouldn't take on another job because once I had "actor" on my passport, that was it. I felt that if I got another job to earn some money it would have diminished the fire.

PETER BOWLES
Daily Mail

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.



"And now, the end is near, and so I face the final curtain..."



SIGNAL FAILURES

ONE of the few positive aspects of the way many privatised utilities are regulated, notably BT, is that they aren't allowed to favour customers who live in large conurbations over those in remoter areas. But not so the railways.

It costs far more to provide services in areas where population density is low, but the tariffs applying for, say, phonelines in rural East Anglia are the same as in central London. Rail businesses, however, escaped any such constraint in the regulatory regime cobbled together by the Tories, and people in peripheral areas are already suffering — even before any franchisee has run into financial trouble.

Virgin Rail is a case in point. As soon as it took control of the InterCity Cross Country franchise, it offered groups of four the chance to travel for the price of one between Manchester and Birmingham. A few months later the price of Virgin-controlled SuperSaver tickets from England to destinations like Oban, Perth and Inverness suddenly shot up by 15 percent.

Soon after Virgin took on the InterCity West Coast franchise, it reduced to £17.50 the advance booking (Apex) fare from Manchester, Liverpool and other towns to London Euston. But passengers from Chester, Bangor and Holyhead continued to pay the same fare as before — in some cases two to three times as much for exactly the same distance.

Later the fare was reduced to £25, but this still left Chester passengers paying much more than those from Manchester and Liverpool, despite being closer to London. Virgin explains the discrepancy by saying the service from Chester and Holyhead is not as good as from Manchester and Liverpool. True: there are only three through trains to London a day from Chester and Holyhead. But is it fair that some passengers should pay more for a worse service?

MEANWHILE at another Irish Sea port, Fishguard, the long-standing InterCity boat train to and from London is eking out its last two

years before Great Western Trains knows it will be able to make bigger profits running the train elsewhere.

InterCity franchisees are not the only ones concentrating on profitable core routes. South Wales and West Railway is piling extra services on its main route — from Manchester to Hereford and Cardiff — while claiming not to have enough trains to provide adequate local services in south Devon and the Bristol area, where many passengers have to take the bus.

This trend is likely to accelerate, particularly among the hard-pressed franchisees. Though their agreements commit them to running "at least the current annual number of train miles", this is a sly clause to disarm critics: it does not specify where or when those train miles must be run. As things stand, the franchisees are entitled to remove trains from long peripheral routes and use them to provide extra services, without the expense of hiring more trains, on money-spinning routes in densely populated areas.

INDIVIDUAL stations on busy main lines can also be sacrificed for commercial gain. Communities along the King's Cross to Edinburgh line, especially in Hertfordshire, are affected by cuts, both already made and threatened, because operators can make bigger profits running trains non-stop between major population centres.

Nor can passengers expect much protection from the passenger services requirements (PSRs), which are supposed to guarantee minimum service levels. They allow a proportion of services to be cut on most routes; but when even that does not suit the profit-making ambitions of franchisees they simply apply to the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (Opraf) to change them. Thus within months of being privatised, Anglia Railways diverted a Harwich to Peterborough boat train to run to Cambridge instead.

Many observers foresaw that peripheral stations would suffer under a sell-off that changed the service-led railway to a money-led one, but their concerns were brushed aside by Tory ministers who said PSRs provided cast-iron guarantees. But as Opraf told the *Eye*: "There is an amendment procedure. They [the PSRs] are not tablets of stone." If the new government is serious about tightening regulation, it knows where to start.

'Dr B. Ching'

Rotten Boroughs



HULL

HULL chief executive Ian Crookham was unhappy with the *Eye* for describing Coun John Black as "freeloading" after he raked in £42,000 of expenses in his year as mayor. Crookham wants readers to know that a large part of that sum was spent on providing civic hospitality for dignitaries.

Fair enough; but it is a pity Black is in trouble for claiming expenses after staying the night in a hotel on a housing conference even though the bill had already been paid by the council's housing department. Black is adamant the double claim was a genuine mistake, as of course it must have been.

Perk of the Week

RHONDDA Cynon Taff council, having saved £10,000 by scrapping free school milk for its poorest children, is now planning to axe free school transport. Thank heavens, though, it found the cash to inaugurate its new mayor properly.

The night out (a seven-course banquet for 400 guests) cost £12,000 — a much better use of resources than spending the money on cartons of milk or bus tickets for some of Britain's less well off schoolchildren.

Bedford

Bedford's race equality council appears to have been doing bugger all for the last eight years while allegedly combatting discrimination in the predominantly white town.

That's the verdict after auditors were sent in by the exasperated town council to examine the board's books. The council wanted to know what the race people have been doing with their £72,500 annual grant for the last eight years, not to mention the £18,500 they had from the Commission for Racial Equality.

Red tape update

KENSINGTON and Chelsea council has taken five months to respond to an appeal from a motorist against a parking fine.

The man, who had explained in writing why he should be let off, eventually received a long letter telling him his excuses had been given careful consideration. He was told that the service records of the engineer maintaining meters in the area had been checked, and in fact it was the motorist's responsibility to ensure the right amount of money had been put in the meter, thus the penalty charge could not be cancelled.

The parking department then concluded its letter with a bizarre conclusion, no doubt aided by five long months of contemplation: "Discretion has been exercised in this case and it has been decided to cancel the above Penalty Charge Notice".

Junkets latest

THE high-spending quango Marketing Manchester, funded by the area's mainly Labour councils to promote the region, was already under fire for the pisspoor slogan "Manchester — We're Up and Going" when it announced details of a crass £15,000 junket.

Leaders of the area's 10 district councils will visit Chalon sur Saone in France to learn... how to run a successful street festival. They need only walk down Castlefield in the city centre most summer weekends to see what a successful street festival looks like — at no cost to the taxpayer.

Sheffield

THE people of Sheffield were shocked when they learnt that, in addition to fraudulent housing benefit claims amounting to £1.6m by members of the public, 79 of their city council officers had been fiddling the system from the inside by nearly £200,000.

Why, locals ask, did councillors do nothing to stop the rot — councillors like talented Kali Mountford in Hillsborough ward?

She was a councillor between 1992 and 1996 and sat on the policy committee, the planning and economic development committee, and chaired the finance committee. Neither she nor any of her fellow financial experts spotted the fraud going on under their noses.

Mountford needn't worry about such trifling matters now, however: the evidently skilful finance chair is the new Labour MP for Colne Valley. She replaces another financially astute public servant, Graham Riddick, the disgraced Tory who accepted £1,000 in the *Sunday Times* cash for questions set-up.

Double standards spotlight

DID Steve Cowley, deputy leader of the Isle of Wight unitary authority, get special treatment from his colleagues?

The planning committee recently voted to allow Cowley to get round a stipulation that a farm he owns can only be used for agricultural purposes. Cowley, who sits on the committee, was absent from the meeting, so didn't see or hear the rude people in the public gallery who were wielding a 64-name petition and shouting out accusations of "corruption". He now wants to sell the farm.

FACT: An application by a member of the public to drop a similar stipulation for a different property was turned down on the same night by the same committee.

Leeds

GAYNOR FAYE, who plays Judy Mallett in *Coronation Street*, the Manchester-based soap, recently helped Leeds city council with its glossy campaign to attract tourists and shoppers to the west Yorkshire city with the slogan "Leeds — you'll love it".

Er, Gaynor has now fled her Leeds home after being intimidated by gangs of local children who threatened to remove the wheels from her car. The arrival of Harvey Nicks clearly hasn't civilised all the natives yet.

Pseud's Corner



Huutajat — or The Screaming Men — was formed in 1987 by conductor and composer Petri Sirviö in the small town of Oulu in northern Finland. Today the choir consists of over thirty members who, in the words of their orchestrator, quite clearly have nothing better to do.

A performance by Huutajat contains sharp contrasts: thirty men from the same small town all wearing black suits, white shirts and black rubber ties line up in strict configuration and scream a repertoire of workers songs, national anthems and quotes from Finnish laws. Their emphatically disciplined expression verges on the primal: precise articulation mixes with non-linguistic howl; amusing turns to serious without warning.

This is not a concept, it is a brain charge — an intense sonic explosion that comes from the edge, from the very periphery of Europe.

Press release for 'The Screaming Men'

She [Arundhati Roy] turned to writing fiction in an attempt to find quiet and anonymity in her life and is currently on an international promotional tour.

Mail on Sunday

[Philip] Roth's greatness is that he refuses the complacent. He must always deliver his characters to the guichet of the essential, and then watch them fall.

Roth sets himself the metaphysical task of understanding how anyone could possibly live contentedly. Full of despair, raging and elegiac, his answer is that none of us is happy. In long, fibrous sentences of tremendous reach and difficult vitality, sentences lit by the chandeliers of all their gathered moments, he presents his case. It is enthralling.

JAMES WOOD
Guardian

The predominantly informally shaped, playfully irrational lighting elements in the two restaurants "Herzog Tassilo" and "Max Emanuel" are conceived as important counterpole to the severe space division and architecture. In connection with the rational, geometrically shaped parts they are intended to represent as a whole a kind of symbiosis of two apparently opposite phenomena, which act together in a tension-laden harmony relationship and stand for our basic needs for order on the one hand and for freedom on the other.

Guide to Munich Airport

A waiter trollies in with the full Dorchester breakfast, flourishes tureen lid and napkin, leaves. Our Harry [Hill] regards his plate, arms himself with Dorchester eating irons, regards his plate some more. Speaks. "There is one pork sausage," he says. "And one beef sausage." The comment and the duality of its flavour stands as a leitmotiv: the Hill mind-set laid bare. The full range is on offer, all the way from pork to beef.

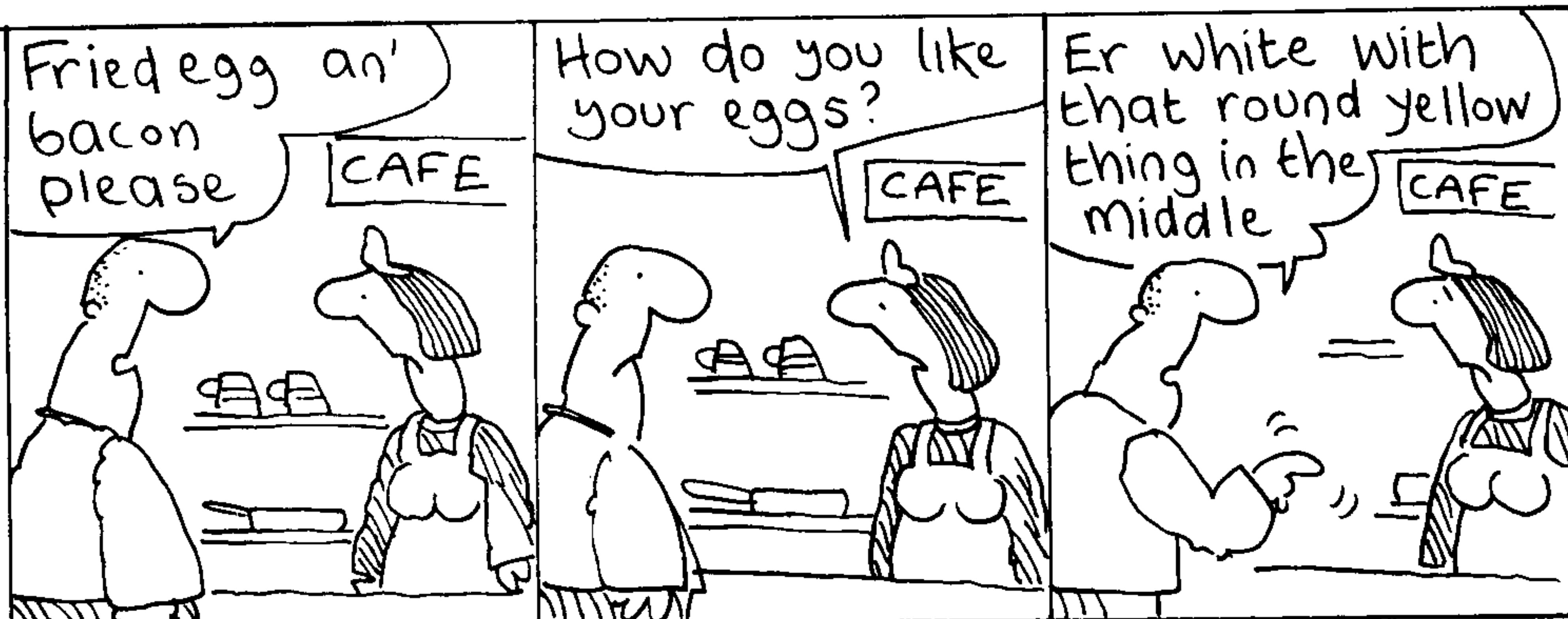
SALLY VINCENT
Guardian Weekend Magazine

CONTRIBUTORS: Robert Fenner, P. Gill, D. Williams, Keith Armstrong, Lorenzo Wood.

£10 paid for entries



HUSBAND



Satanic Abuse Special

JETTING ROUND THE WORLD...

IMAGINE the Keystone Cops in a madcap chase down the Information Superhighway, and you will have some idea of the farcical ineffectiveness of Nottinghamshire county council's campaign to suppress an embarrassing official report on the "satanic abuse" myth.

As we noted in the last *Eye*, the council has obtained an injunction against three journalists — plus a former social services executive — who posted the document (known as the JET report) on the internet. Pending the full hearing of the case in September, the defendants have duly withdrawn it from their site.

But, as any fule kno, the internet is full of "mirror sites" — and by the time the report disappeared, identical copies had already surfaced in many far-flung outposts of cyberspace.

Undaunted, the Nottinghamshire solicitor, C.P. McKay, has been trying to extend his jurisdiction around the globe. One victim was a 21-year-old student in Canada, Jeremy Freeman, who "mirrored" the JET report on his server. Soon afterwards he had an email from McKay instructing him to erase the offending item forthwith or face legal action for copyright infringement.

Fearing an expensive lawsuit, young Freeman replaced the text with a "hyperlink" to another site in the United States. Five hours later he was sent another email from Nottingham's answer to Sue Gabbit & Runne, explaining that even a hyperlink to another site counted as publication. If Freeman didn't destroy the link, court action would commence without further notice. Unsure of his rights, Freeman complied.

The indefatigable McKay then noticed a copy of the JET report on an American site. Off went another email, warning that "unless the report is removed from the website forthwith and for the avoidance of doubt within 24 hours of receipt by you of this mail the Nottinghamshire county council will issue such court proceedings including injunction proceedings or take any action as may be appropriate."

The recipient, Peter Junger, is professor of law at the university of Cleveland, Ohio. In his reply, after chiding McKay for his "silliness", he gave the Notts solicitor a tutorial in certain elementary legal points. First, "you ignore the fact that I and my web site are located in Cleveland, Ohio, in the United States of America, a locus where the writs of the courts of the United Kingdom have never run."

Secondly, even if the high court in London could somehow be persuaded to injunct an American professor living outside the jurisdiction who has no connection whatever with the UK, the order would be unenforceable under American law. Thirdly, in America the publication of a factual compilation in the public interest — and not for profit — counts as "fair use" and is protected by the US constitution. As Junger concluded: "I shall therefore not comply with your demands."

This shocking disobedience seems to be infectious. "Personally, I don't give a flying fuck about your copyrights," one overseas nethead wrote to the hapless McKay. "Accordingly, I am going to immediately make this report available to anyone who asks for it, especially for those in the UK."

One of the many news groups in which the JET

report has surfaced is "uk.legal", which means there are a lot of lawyers out there who may be sued if they don't delete it at once. Also a lot of radio hams ("uk.radio-amateur") and, curiously, chefs ("uk.food&drink"). No doubt all these outlaws can soon expect a visit from the latter-day Sheriff of Nottingham.

... BUT STILL TIED UP IN NOTTS

MEANWHILE Tim Bell, of Notts social services, has been trying to justify the council's heavy-handed attempts at censorship (see Letters page). He insists that he isn't trying to suppress debate about the satanic-abuse fiasco, merely "protecting confidentiality".

As he really ought to know, this was also the *raison d'être* of the JET report. The full report by the Joint Enquiry Team — which did indeed contain confidential details — ran to five volumes of more than 600 pages. The document that has now surfaced on the internet is a short and sanitised summary which was specifically rewritten for a wider circulation, and therefore concealed the identities of the children involved.

Our letters page also carries an indignant denial from Tim Tate, the former *Cook Report* researcher who was criticised by the Joint Enquiry Team. How, he wonders, could the children have given "corroborative accounts" of satanic rituals "without ever having contact with each other"? Simple: they did have contact. More importantly, so did their foster parents, who compared notes with each other and with Notts social services.

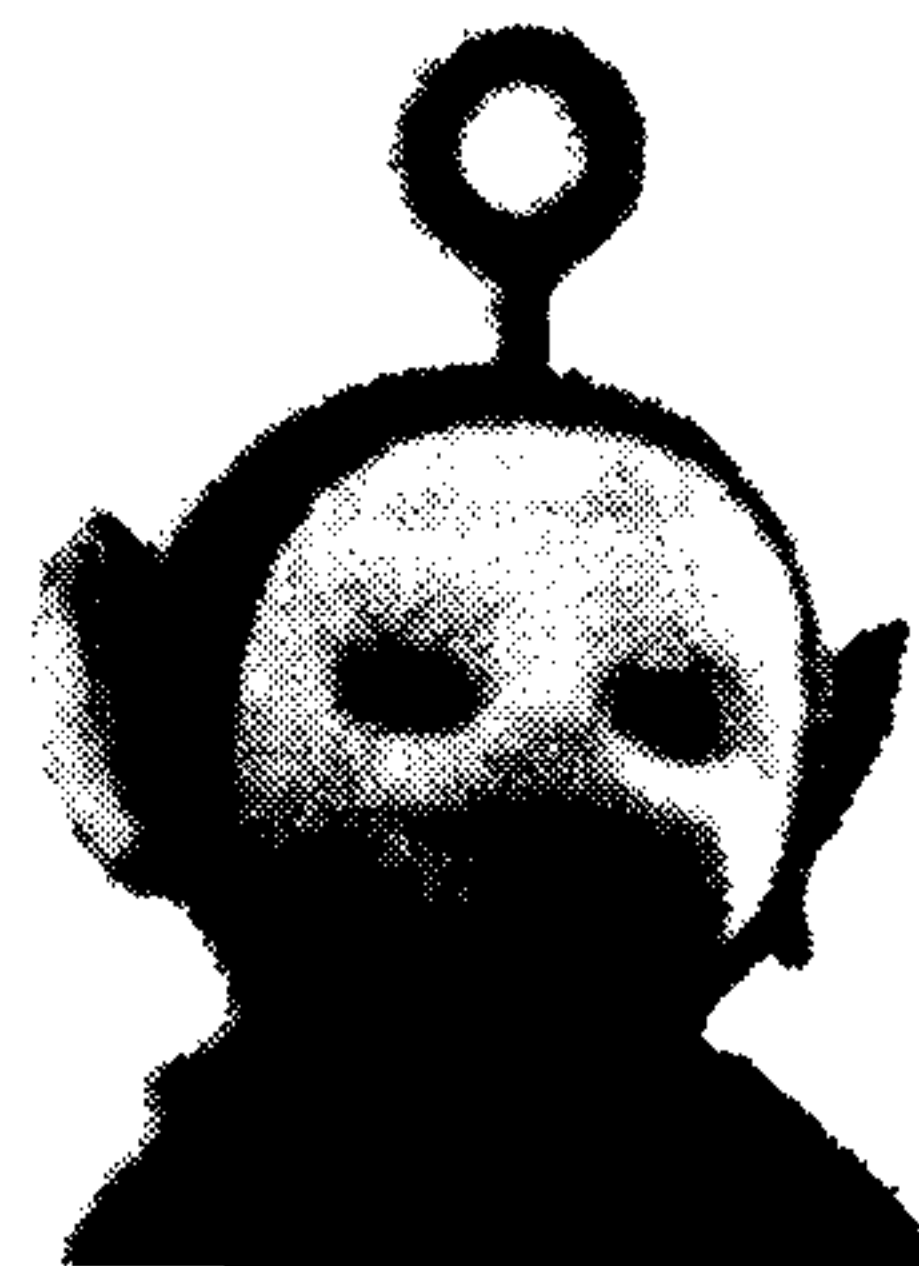
Tate points out that the children started making their bizarre allegations "several weeks" before he gave social workers a list of "satanic indicators". But the JET report never suggested that this list was the *only* inspiration for the children's satanic fantasies. It draws attention to startling similarities between the children's stories and certain TV programmes and books which were popular at the time. (To give just one example, immediately after a television screening of *Jaws*, one or two children started talking about "blood in the water" — which was promptly interpreted as yet further evidence of sacrificial rites.) There were also the "symbolic objects" used by the NSPCC team to jog the children's memories — including a witch's costume, snakes, spiders and masks. Sure enough, all these props then started appearing in the children's diaries.

In the last *Eye* we reported that some children gave detailed descriptions of tunnels under Wollaton Hall in which satanic rituals had allegedly taken place. "No such tunnels existed," we added. Tate seems to think we were denying that there are *any* tunnels at Wollaton Hall. Not so: all we said was that none of them remotely matched the children's description. The police carried out a thorough search of every tunnel at the Hall — many of them small, damp, cramped drainage shafts — and concluded that they were completely unsuitable for the sort of elaborate rites imagined by the children. As the JET report notes, one witness gave a particularly detailed account of "the rooms under Wollaton Hall, the entrances and the tunnel lit by torchlights... On being taken to Wollaton Hall she could not identify anything and it was apparent that she had little knowledge of the place".

Private Eye

Letters

Lookalike



Tory leader



Teletubby

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the remarkable likeness between Tory young contender William Hague and the members of the TELETUBBIES?

Yours sincerely,
B.A. IRVING,

London SE9.

Job lots

Sir,

Michael Blagden of Southgate College is confusing desire with reality in his cheap dig at his staff. In Britain employees still have the right to form workplace associations and negotiate fair conditions of employment. The tone of Mr Blagden's letter suggests such rights are to be despised because they get in the way of business "flexibility". Examples of such flexibility include: sign the new contract or you're sacked — sorry, that should read "outplaced"; teach as many hours as I say — let's start with 35 a week (not even primary schools work such hours and they get paid more); compete for your own job; take a pay cut and don't ever criticise me or I'll sack you. Job? You're lucky to have one, mate.

The issue is not old contracts, new contracts, it is the language of arrogance and scorn so evident in principals' pronunciations whenever they refer to teaching staff.

I notice Southgate College has the worst A level scores in its borough. It's bumping along the bottom with the rest of the London colleges. To quote Ann Widdecombe, they "confessed to nothing except success and denied responsibility for everything else".

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL J. COOK,

London SE4.

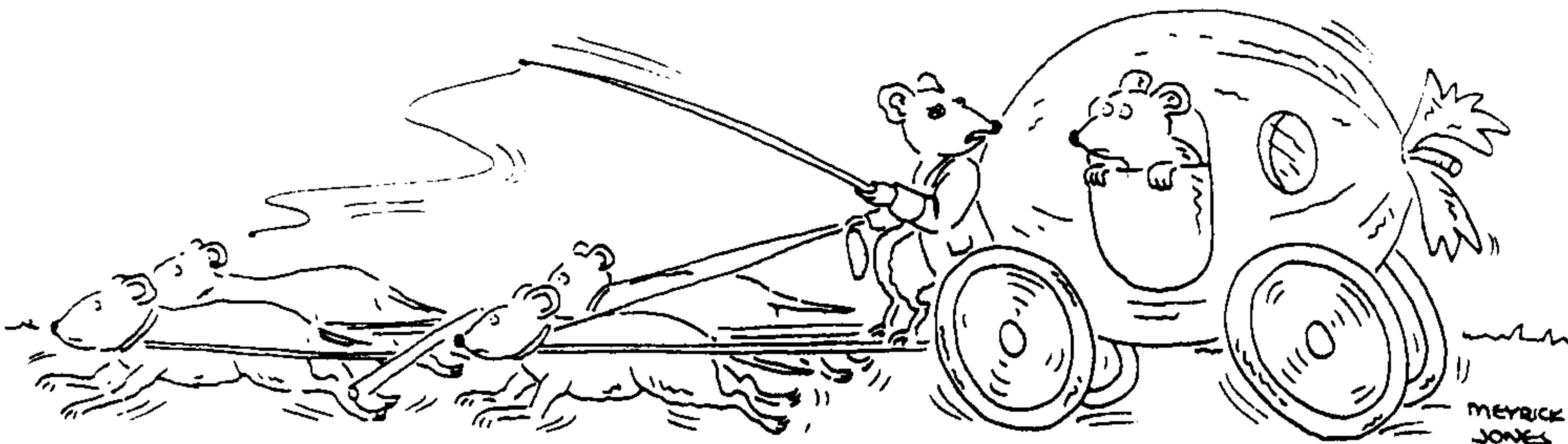
Taking exception

Sir,

On the day that television news was headlining the supposed drug overdose by Naomi Campbell, a certain advert returned to our screens, which we had not seen for ages. It stars the aforementioned personage, and the punch-line at the end is "Life is for the taking". Can these two items by any chance be related? Is there a TV executive out there with a particularly gruesome sense of humour?

Yours,
MIKE BLYTHE,

Finchampstead, Berks.



"I had that Cinderella in the back once"

Bell quits church in row with vicar

The Scotsman

Grains of truth

Sir,

Your New Boys article about me maintained a long PRIVATE EYE tradition of sorting the wheat from the chaff and then publishing the chaff. I should like to comment on some of your inaccuracies about me.

Fact: You say that as soon as Manchester UDC got results I climbed aboard. Although in principle I am against non elected public bodies, I was a member of the UDC from day one.

Fact: Major companies were not chased out of Manchester by "punitive rate rises". Refuse Assurance, your only example for this, relocated to Wilmslow for its own business reasons.

Fact: I have never promised "no rate rises" but in common with others I fought vigorously against the Thatcher policies which forced Manchester into increasing rates.

Fact: Your suggestion that Manchester wants a second runway for reasons of "self aggrandizement" is nonsense. The growth of Manchester Airport will create 50,000 jobs, more than any other single project in the north of England.

Fact: I am not the Chairman of Manchester Airport PLC. I resigned from this position after the general election, and well before your article was published.

Fact: I have never supported changing the name of the Free Trade Hall to Peterloo Hall.

Fact: Manchester Ship Canal Company is not bankrolling the Commonwealth Games. There is no such position as a "paid city council delegate".

Fact: As to wringing my hands at the thought of the city trade centre dying, more than a billion pounds is being injected into the city.

Yours sincerely,

GRAHAM STRINGER MP,

House of Commons, SW1.

According to Dr Menzeleli Msauli, head of the circumcision sepsis-prevention and intervention-programme unit at East London's Cecilia Makiwane hospital, it is women who are at the forefront of this movement, and who are insisting that boys be given medical examinations before they go into the bush.

Sunday Independent (S.Africa)

Leading man

Sir,

It is time to change your Manchester correspondent, whose articles are consistently a mix of untruths and inaccurate spin. Take the "analysis" of Graham Stringer (EYE 926), for example. While Stringer is undoubtedly dour and prone to exaggerated claims about the airport protestors, it is arrant nonsense to blame him for the industrial decline of Manchester (which has not only been going on since the 1960s, but intensified particularly during the early 1980s).

Like many councils, under Stringer Manchester attempted to plot its own course and resist central diktat during the 1980s, in terms of, for example, undemocratic planning authorities (the UDCs). Although the unitary nature of power in Britain than anything else meant that it failed, I thought that the EYE had consistently stood against the corruption that such quangos represented.

To continue, the Olympic bids were private sector initiatives with the council's backing and although it didn't get the games, the second bid levered in millions of pounds of national government money which has transformed Hulme, parts of East Manchester and brought in the Metrolink service.

And as for the airport, for reasons rehearsed many times, Speke was not a viable alternative site. Manchester Airport has excellent road and rail transport links to the North West, the Midlands and Yorkshire. Speke does not. Manchester Airport is a major generator of economic activity for the whole of the north of England and its expansion is popular throughout the north (with the exception of in Merseyside and in the affluent villages of Cheshire).

Yours sincerely,

DR ADAM TICKELL,

School of Geography, University of Manchester.

Pay and display

Sir,

Paul has rather put his Foot in it (EYE 926) when he castigates Gavin Strang for upholding DoT action on busmen's pension money.

His implication that Strang's reaction should be dictated by T&G union because they pay his constituency expenses is an interesting point of view but perverse coming from someone whose stock in trade is to examine both sides of an argument dispassionately. Or does this only apply when trades unions are not involved?

Yours,

J.W. FLEMING,

Hereford.

Thought of trains

Sir,

Nick Thompson shows the same kind of selfishness to users of Welwyn North station as GNER shows to users of other rail services (EYE 926).

The problem that GNER appears to have with Welwyn North station is not so much that the station exists on the mainline and that local trains stop at it (heaven forbid) but that GNER, despite having the country's most modern rolling stock running on the country's most modern infrastructure, can still only manage to run 60.5 percent of their trains on time (EYE 925). Thus 40 percent of GNER's trains presumably miss their timetabled slot through Welwyn North and have to be fitted in between other (more punctual) local services as and when they turn up.

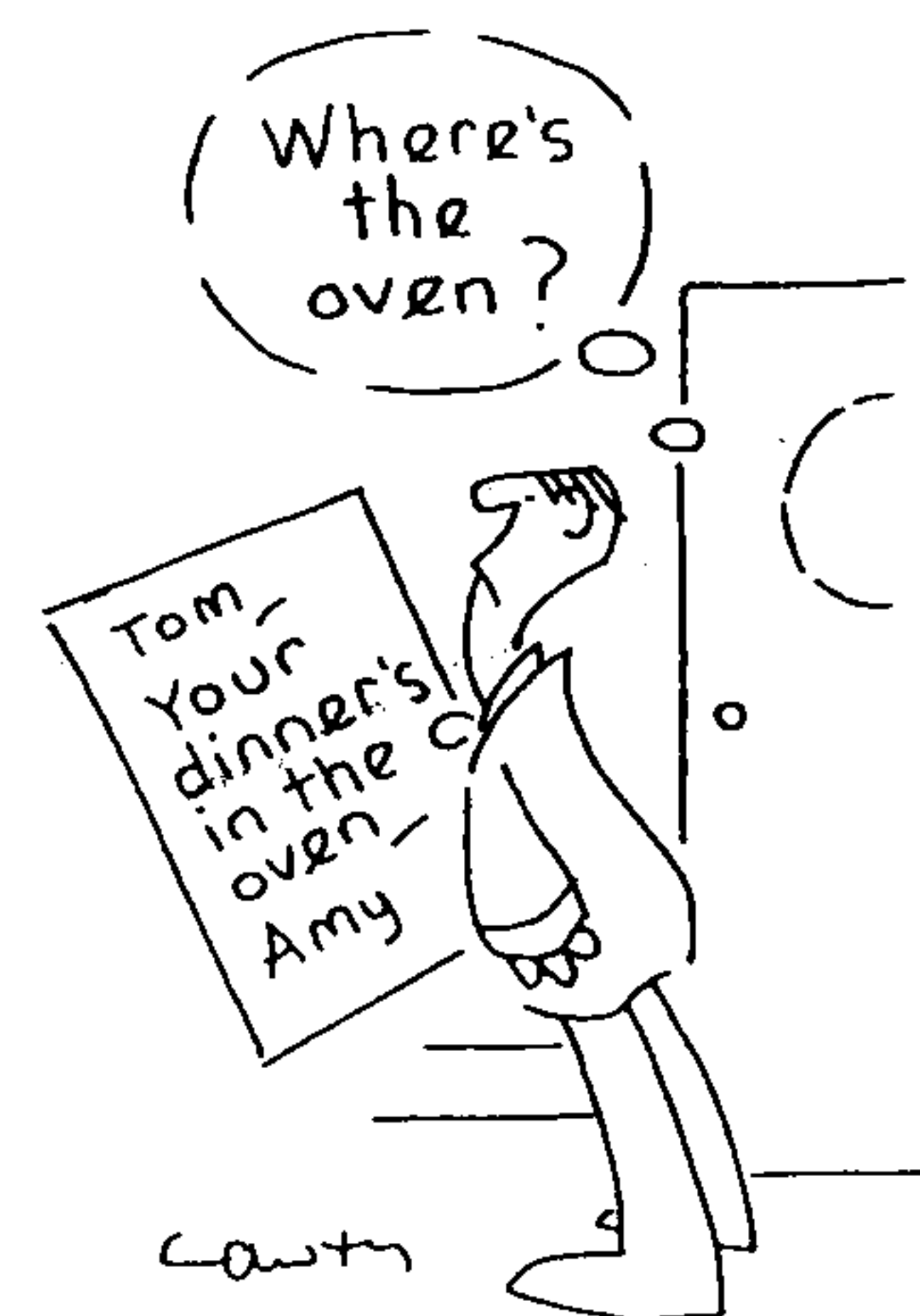
As one of the many commuters who regularly use Welwyn North, I am reasonably happy with the service provided by the local operator West Anglia Great Northern (WAGN). However, we do get pissed off by our trains being delayed because they've been held up waiting for a late-running GNER train to pass through Welwyn North.

There's been a station at Welwyn North for nigh on 150 years, throughout the heyday of the railways. It's strange that it's not caused any train company a problem in that time — except for GNER.

Yours faithfully,

MARTYN ATKINS,

Welwyn, Herts.



Driven to distraction

Sir,

Re Smooth Operator (Letters, 926): the driver travelling 100 miles to/from work does so in his own car and time before working shifts starting at 4am, and later, and lasting up to 11 hours. But then who cares that if the driver on his way to work possibly his 13th consecutive day on duty has an accident?

As Nick Thompson says — this is only commercial sense. However, seeing the spare cover turns have been cut to a bare minimum, when the train gets cancelled due to no driver what category does he put this in?

The fact that a driver may have been away from home for maybe 12 hours before completing his final journey doesn't seem to bother Nick Thompson — though as he lives in Cambridge away from the GNER route, why should it?

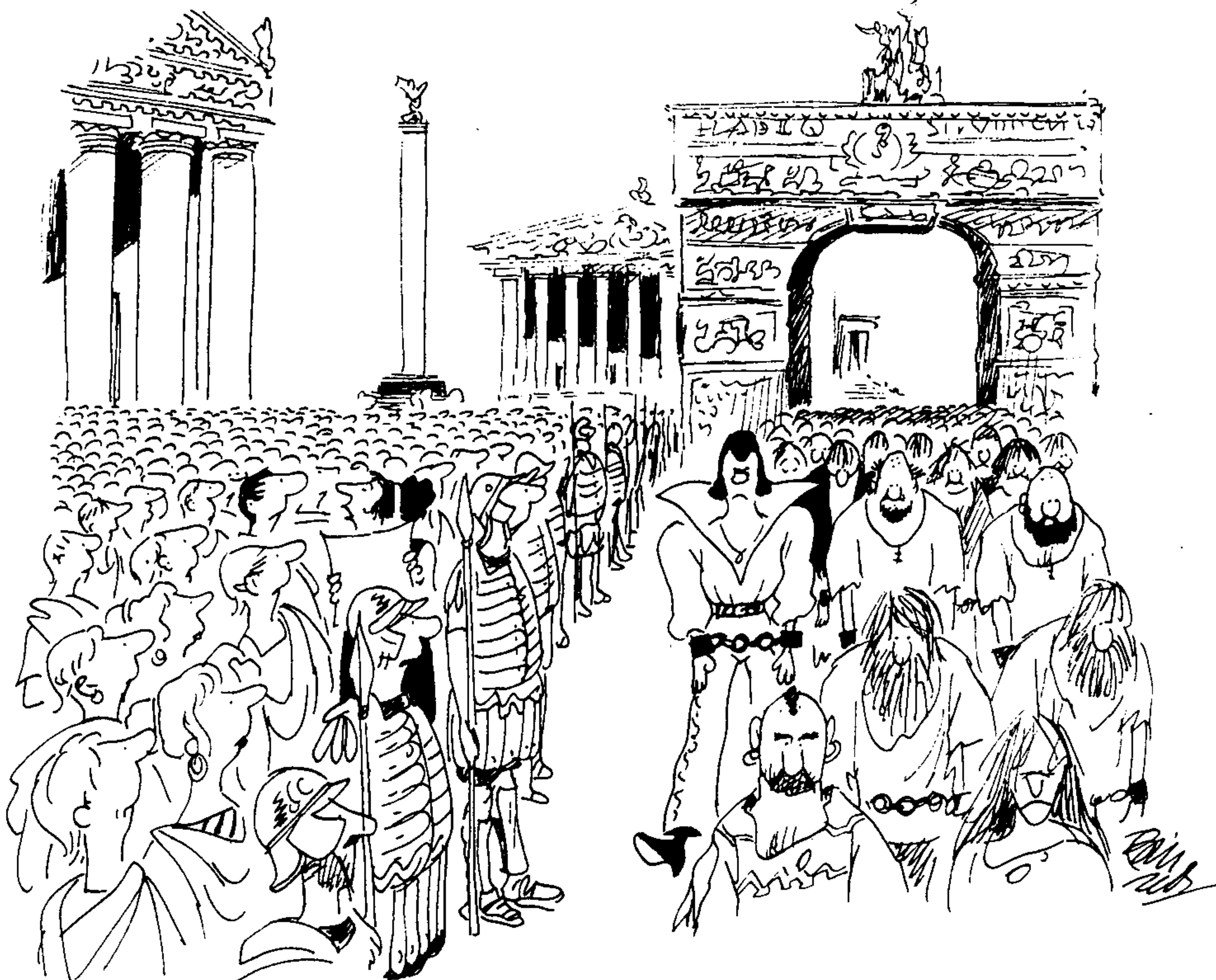
As a driver maybe this letter might seem a bit biased, but then, why somebody who lives away from the GNER route should stick up for them seems a bit odd, unless he's just one more of the many GNER managers who still live in a dreamland and think life on the privatised railways is just a truly wonderful thing!

I think we should be told as to what side of the tracks he stands on!

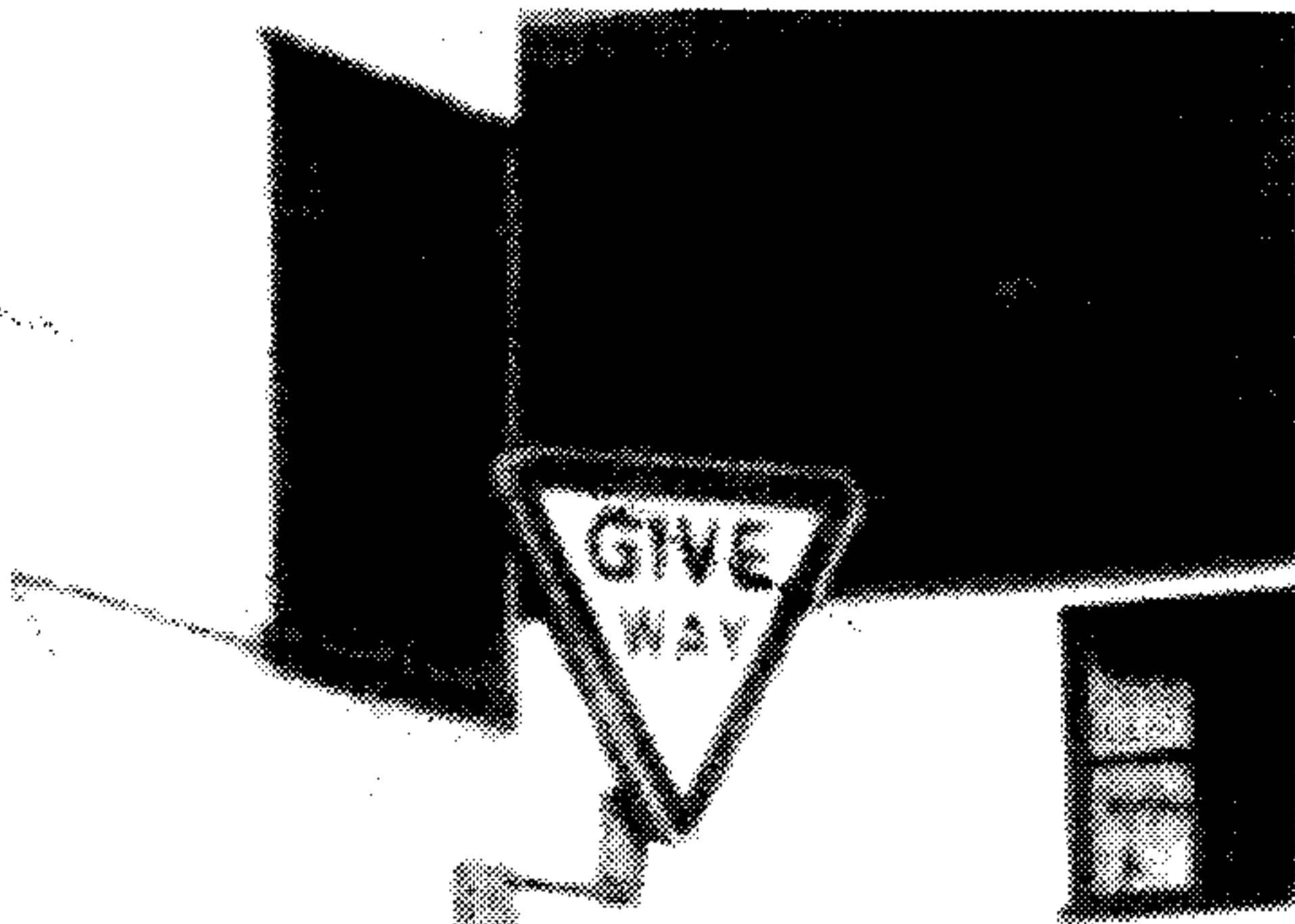
Yours sincerely,

PAUL KEENAN,

South Shields, Tyne & Wear.



I-SPY Long Stratton



Submitted by Angela McClelland. £10 paid for similar submissions. (SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

When Harry met Willie

Sir,
Conservative Central Office are said to have asked the BBC to ensure that Harry Enfield's "Tory Boy" did not appear on our screens during the election campaign. Now he is Tory Party leader. What next?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL HILL,

Hillingdon, Middx.

Take care

Sir,
For the record (in response to Satanic Abuse Special, 13 June) we're not about suppressing public debate on a matter of public interest; we are about protecting the confidentiality of information given to us by the people we are here to help.

Imagine you're a young, impressionable person. You had a major crisis in your life and the care and support of social workers over a number of years has [sic] helped you put your life together again. But then, without warning, the details of the most distressing time in your life are suddenly available for all to read. How do you feel?

And as chair of social services what signal does it send to all of our clients and hard-working and committed staff if I don't take all reasonable steps to try and end the illegal publication of that confidential material?

As to public interest, let me assure you that I've been chair three years and in that time the number of people who have asked me to release the "controversial" JET report is zero.

I believe we have a duty to protect some young people still in our care from disclosure of the detail in the JET report. However a second report — publicly available since 1990 — discussed the satanic abuse issues without breaching confidentiality. No one had asked for that in years, either, but as soon as the NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST approached us about the story we put the latter report in their hands. It provided them with the basis for a full discussion of the issues raised by the case, they said so!

I'm no keener on litigation than you are — but the internet cannot be a "responsibility-free" zone.

TIM BELL,

Chair, Nottinghamshire Social Services.

Abusive

Sir,

Does the EYE ever bother to check anything? Your piece on the Nottingham child abuse case and the very minor role I played in it was woefully short on the facts. Which are:

1. The Nottingham children gave remarkably detailed and corroborative accounts of experiencing sexual and physical abuse in bizarre rituals. They somehow managed to get their accounts to match without ever having contact with each other.

2. The children began making their bizarre allegations several weeks before either Ray Wyre met the foster parents or I handed the so-called "list of satanic indicators" (actually a rather quiet little document detailing what children reported in cases of alleged ritual abuse) to social workers. Rather difficult, then, for the bizarre disclosures to be attributed to our involvement.

3. I have never alleged there to be "satanic networks" in existence — much less become a zealous believer in them. I simply did what any journalist should do: a little research. It didn't take long to discover that the first successful prosecution of adults for sexually abusing children during satanic rituals took place in Telford, Shropshire, in 1982. Since then there has been a handful of other such prosecutions.

4. As to my being a "zealot", international organisations from Amnesty to UNESCO have honoured my films with awards: they unaccountably seem not to share the EYE's views.

5. The Nottingham JET report was never published because it was such a shoddy, inaccurate and libellous document. The writers even managed completely to reverse my views despite having a lengthy interview with me.

6. The tunnels which don't apparently exist under Wollaton Hall must then be a figment of the official Mining Record Office since it has a whole series of such tunnels shown on its maps — not to mention the very public tunnel in the grounds of the hall which used to be open as a tourist attraction.

The saddest aspect of the EYE's coverage is the effect it (along with similar claptrap from the tabloids) has on child protection. As the film I produced on the Cleveland crisis showed, media clamour — however inaccurate — frequently has the effect of paralysing child protection. The result is that abused children are left unprotected.

Yours sincerely,
TIM TATE,

Keighley, West Yorks.

Slouch potato

Sir,

Re Paul Foot's article on Allan Schiach and the Scottish Film Production Fund (EYE 926), I feel it should be pointed out that Schiach is not exactly a slouch in the world of film-making. Under the pen name of "Allan Scott" he has co-written several screenplays, including that seminal British horror film of the early 1970s, DON'T LOOK NOW. And he was also an executive producer of SHALLOW GRAVE, which didn't exactly do the Scottish film industry any harm. I can understand Bill Forsyth's disgruntlement but, given the choice, I'd rather watch an Allan Scott-scripted film than one of Forsyth's bits of whimsical tartanry any day.

Yours aye,
TERRY HANSTOCK,

Nottingham.



Aukward gap

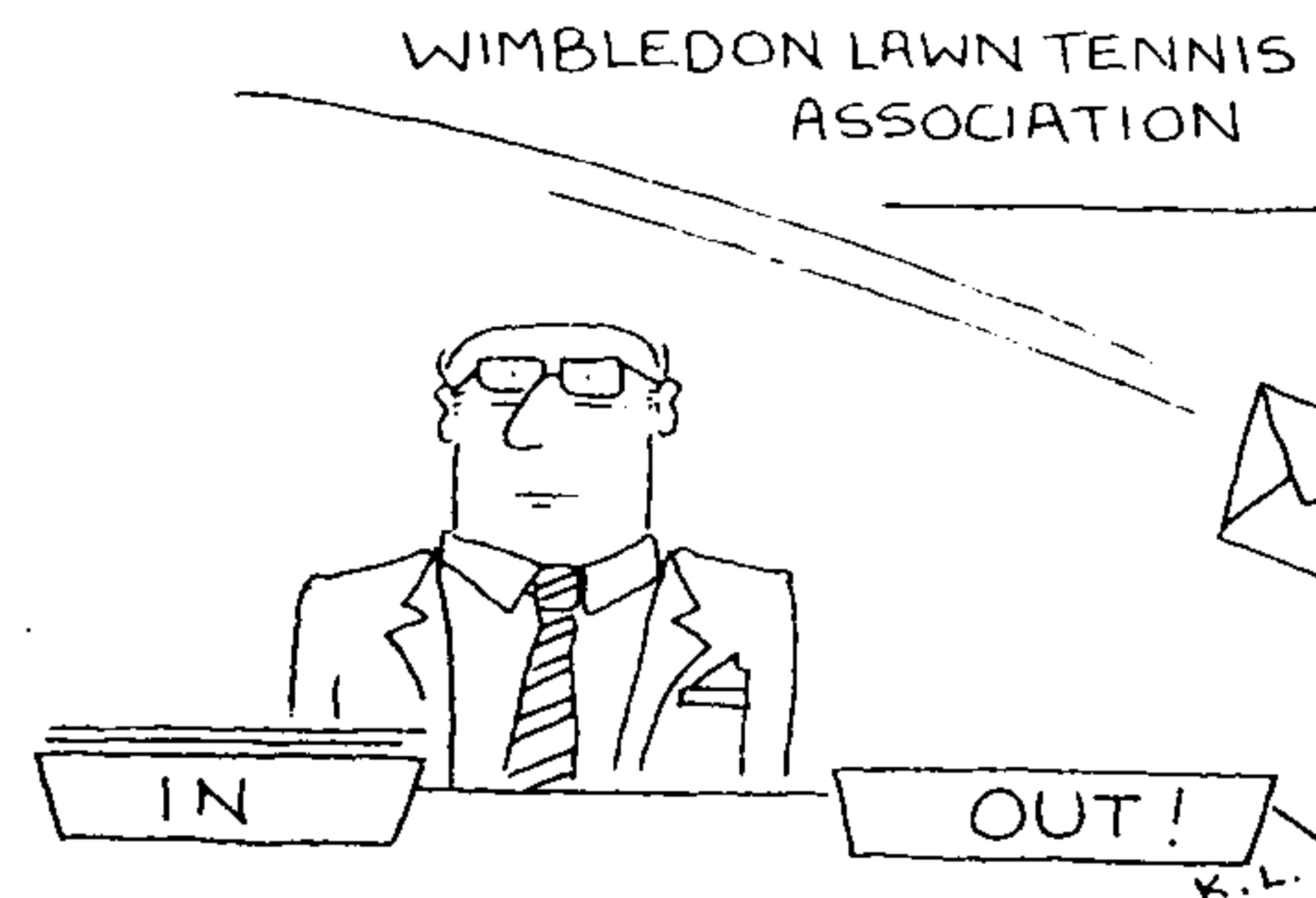
Sir,

What is this "Arctic penguin" of which you write (EYE 926, "Funny Business Age")? Apart from the Galapagos penguin and the creature in BATMAN, the family Spheniscidae lives mostly around the Antarctic.

The arctic bird once called a penguin was the great auk, *Pinguinis impennis*. Any reader sharing their bath with a great auk, or preferably a breeding pair, should contact the Zoological Society. The species has been believed extinct for many decades.

Yours pedantically,
HUGH JAEGER,

London W12.



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Mike Pigg there literally eating up the ground."

HUGH PORTER, BBC2
(Richard Woodard)

"And as Mansell comes into the pits, he's quite literally sweating his eyeballs out."

ITV
(Michael Dunbar)

"You could literally hear the silence 50 miles away."

SIMON BATES, Radio 1
(Eddie Reed)

"And the England team are, literally, dissolving in the centre circle."

Radio 5 Live
(J. Lunn)

"Rangers have been so far ahead. Now they've gone on to, literally, another planet."

GEOFF WEBSTER, BBC Radio Scotland
(Finlay Maclean)

HOM SAP



BY DAVID AUSTIN



FUNNY OLD WORLD

● "The moment I first saw Twinkle, I could tell he was a saint," Narayan Baba told thousands of mourners gathered at a canine funeral in Bombay. "He may have been only a two-week-old pup, but he immediately revealed his religious identity to me through his pious gestures and yogic tail wagging."

Narayan, founder of the Sai Baba temple, was speaking after he had solemnly carried the corpse of the twelve-year-old Pomeranian dog on a palanquin through the streets of Panvel (a suburb of Bombay). "I bought Twinkle in 1985 from a local hotelier for 200 rupees and a gallon



Illustration by P. Picasso

of my mother's lassi. Almost immediately I realised that he was divine. So I renamed him Sri Sai Pandu Baba, dressed him in orange robes, and put him in charge of the temple. I could tell he was a saint reincarnated in a dog's body, and so could his devotees. They made him daily offerings of sweets and savouries, and he blessed them by sniffing their bottoms as they knelt in prayer."

He was so old and deaf that he couldn't hear the moped rider's hooter. He had no chance. Before burial, Twinkle's corpse was bathed in water from seven Indian rivers, and interred with sandalwood and incense in a samadhi next to the body of a German collie (Sri Sai Pandu Baba's previous incarnation). "I shall now begin searching for his next incarnation," said Narayan. "He told me that this time he's coming back as a parrot." (New Delhi Times, 3/4/97. Spotter: Edmond O'Shea)

— ● —

● "Let there be no doubt about the reason I was fired from Western Illinois University," George R. Harker stated as he commenced legal proceedings against his former employers. "I have done nothing wrong. They simply

disapproved of my teaching style, and my specialist studies in the area of nude beaches."

Harker, who now uses the trademark "Dr Leisure" to sell T-shirts in Hawaii, recalled how he had been dismissed from his post as Professor of Nude Beaches in the university's Department of Leisure Studies: "I taught at the university for twenty-one years, and had a tenured faculty job there. Over the years, I developed an interest in nude beaches, and began arranging weekend field trips to the Californian coast for me and my seminar groups. We'd visit nude beaches and hold one-to-one tutorials there — bring your own beer — and further our specialist research. What's wrong with that?"

Harker is suing the university, the union, and the state board, along with seventeen individual defendants, accusing them of violating his academic freedom and his right to due process. A spokesman for the university said that Harker had been sacked after eleven separate charges were brought against him, including the unauthorised relocation of

classes to the Santa Monica nudist beach in California. (The Chronicle of Higher Education [USA], 23/5/97. Spotter: Anon)

— ● —

● "That was the heyday for Moscow's public lavatories, just after Stalin died in 1953," reminisced Alexander Murashov (manager of the Byloye restaurant) in a report by Moscow's Sanitary Inspectorate. "After his death, someone issued an order that the millions of mourners coming to his funeral would need lavatories, so hundreds of little shops were closed down and converted. They were some of the best buildings in the city, but these days most of them have gone, and those that remain are complete shitholes, in every sense."

Nadezhda Konstantinovna (of the sanitary firm MosSanEpidNazdor) agreed. "When everything was owned by the government, there were never any problems with finding public lavatories. They were well looked after, they had attendants and they even had paper — only newspaper, but it was paper all the same. But since Perestroika they've almost all been closed down, and most of the remaining ones have tramps living in them. The smell is unspeakable and many people prefer to shit and piss on the streets. I don't call that progress." (The Moscow Times, 2/8/96. Spotter: RA Hobbs)

COMPILED BY VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH

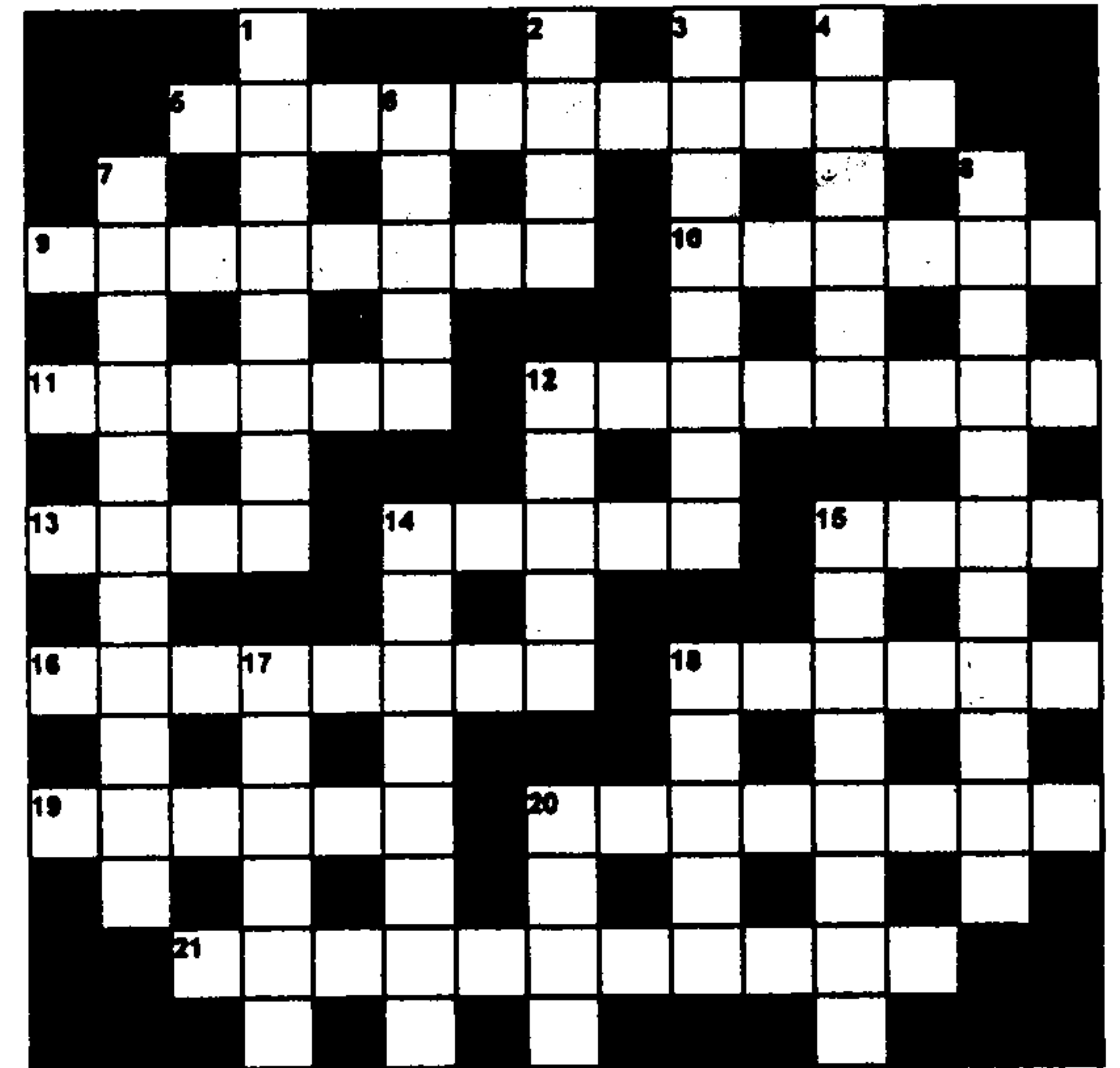
The Lottery Winners

TURNER



EYE CROSSWORD 82

by Cyclops £100 prize



ACROSS

- 5 Flatulence takes a different route, apparently, around autumn — a bonus for Gordon? (8,3)
- 9 About to live with outed Tories somewhere sheltered from reality! (8)
- 10 Spare supermodel needs publicity agency (6)
- 11 Gordonstoun is expressly concealing what 'Charlie' is gender-wise (6)
- 12 Test interrupted by 'silly arse' (as all can see) Brown's lot (8)
- 13 Sailors against being taken out by the working man (4)
- 14 'Behave like a puff' acceptable in politically correct English? (5)
- 15 Our distinguished columnist's bottom (4)
- 16 Minister takes PM (broadcast ditched) on topless publicly-funded spree with Tory leader (8)
- 18 Country prison, commercial grade (6)
- 19 Fabulously big female casually rogers topless Bob (6)
- 20 Being an active trendy type is deeply affecting without Ecstasy (8)
- 21 One with the potential to form a bond with the source of his addiction? (4-7)

DOWN

- 1 Legendary hack, Ulster Jack joins trendy broadcaster (8)
- 2 Shock Sixties musical (4)
- 3 A load of bollocks, but Cyclops owns this entire mag (3,2,3)
- 4 Kelvin on NASA's liberal state (6)
- 6 Arse-over-tip Heath, mounting beefy bloke, gets lush treatment (5)
- 7 Our hackette provides Labour's star minister with flipping good western women (6,5)
- 8 Knockers uniting and getting enduringly close to one another (4-7)
- 12 Maxim awards X to film (5)
- 14 Hacks before Nazi paramilitary johnnies? (8)
- 15 Party forfeit: one penetrates posh girl (4,4)
- 17 Heroin-injector's prick? (6)
- 18 Following ex-PM is the role of this court serenader (5)
- 20 Tabloid with end of week supplement got even lower (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 4.7.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG

Solution to Crossword No. 81

Winner: GEOFF GYI

ACROSS: 8 Vibrator 9 Fat cat 10 Philip 11 Flogging 12 Number Ten 14 Score 16/15 Spanish fishermen 17 Titanic 20 Ebony 22 At the helm 24 Whistler 25 Rights 27 Undies 28 Goebbels.

DOWN: 1 High jump 2 Oral 3 Stop press 4 Grafted 5 Of lot 6 Stagecoach 7 Rayner 13 Banana skin 15 (see 16) 18 Idle talk 19 Storage 21 Behind 23 Flash 26 Gaby.

THAT EARTH SUMMIT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

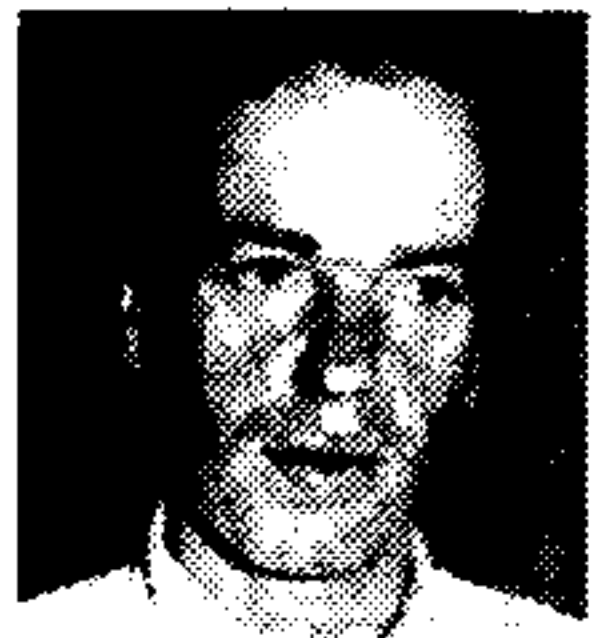
Delegates' Agenda in Full



1. Fly across globe to New York in half-empty jumbo jet.
2. Take large stretch limousine from airport to conference centre.
3. Turn on in-car air-conditioning during 6-hour traffic jam.
4. Fill up 30-gallon tank with petrol every 2 miles.
5. Issue 19 million communiques on the subject of deforestation.
6. Play friendly round of golf on course (formerly nature reserve).
7. Fly in helicopter back to the airport to avoid traffic.
8. Get held in stack above JFK.
9. Miss jumbo jet flight and take Concorde (as only passenger).
10. Buy duty-free cigarettes for everyone at the office.

© Society for the Protection of Endangered Conferences

Martin Amis picks the ones to watch



Wimbledon: Britain's Top Six Hopefuls!

An Eye guide to the men and women who will fly the flag for Britain and bring home glory on the hallowed centre court at Lords.

1. Tim Henman

The No. 14 seed, Tim Henman is our best chance of a British player being seeded No. 14.

2. Greg Tchalkovsky

Although he stands no chance of winning, this plucky Australian is our best hope apart from Tim Henman.

3. Tim Henman

Seeded 14, he is definitely ranked well above the world's No. 15 — which puts him only 13 places away from the No. 1 slot.

4. Reg Shostakovitch

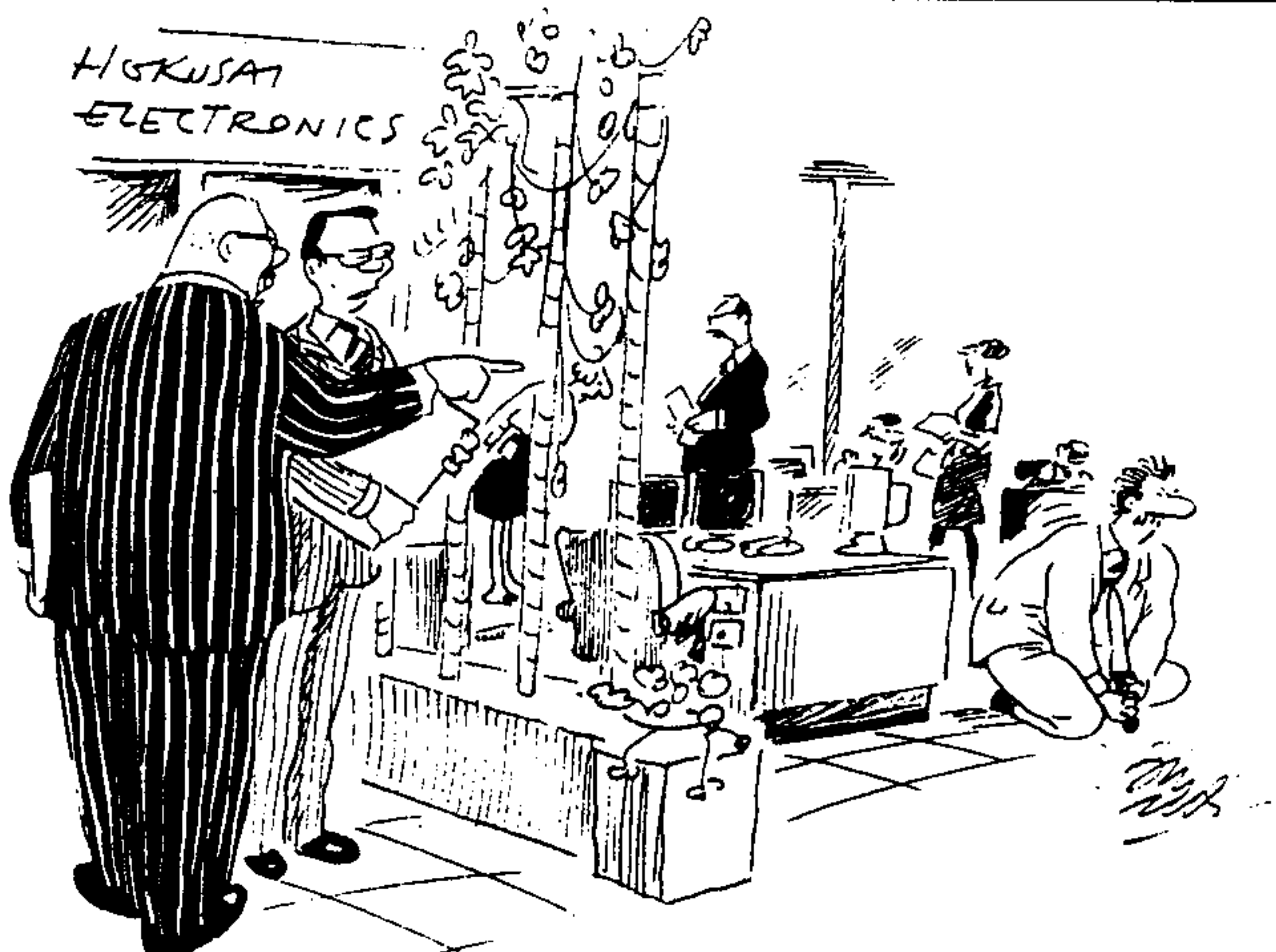
Although technically Russian and a weightlifter, Reg is still Britain's second best hope of grass court glory.

5. Cliff Richard

When it rains, Cliff (ranked No. 741 in the UK charts) is still the man to bring centre court to its feet with his rendition of "Living Dull".

6. Tim Henman

Say what you like about the No. 14 seed, he is seeded No. 14 and no one can take that away from him, except possibly the other seeds. (*That's enough Wimbledon hopefuls, Ed.*)



"Forget our policy on Brits — he might be worth promoting!"

FATMAN & BOY WONDER PG



Wholly unelectable, Fatman!

NEW FILMS

Fantasy tale of two superheroes, Fatman (played by Kenneth Clarke) and the Boy Wonder (William Hague).

The former colleagues in the fight against Labour (*shurely* 'crime'? Ed) fall out over a woman, Poison Maggy, and end up fighting each other.

Will they come to their senses and join together to rescue the Tory Party? No.

Don't miss the cameos of Mr Sleaze (Cecil Parkinson) and Fatwoman (Ann Widdecombe).

Eye rating: Ker-Powerless!



A Taxi-Driver writes

EVERY week a well-known taxi driver is invited to give his opinion on an issue of topical importance.

This week: **Paul Johnson** (Cab No. 982) writes on the collapse of the Jonathan Aitken libel action.

Blimey, guv! I don't see what all the fuss is about meself! I mean, 'e's workin' for the government right so 'e's got to lie, inne, or he'll be found out? Stands to reason — and 'e's gotta sell 'em arms cos that's his job.

And if that means layin' on a couple of jam tarts for the Arabs then good luck to him!

I mean look what's 'appened to 'im now. 'is wife's left him, 'e's lost his job and all 'is money — I think the papers should be ashamed of themselves what they done to 'im and 'is family. They should be taken to court!

All 'e's ever done is help this country back on its feet. I think they should give 'im a medal.

I 'ad that Prince Mohammed in the back of the cab once — I took 'im to Heathrow and charged him £5,000. What's wrong with that?

NEXT WEEK: Taki (Cab No. 173) argues that Jonathan Aitken is as innocent as he is.



PUBLIC LIFE

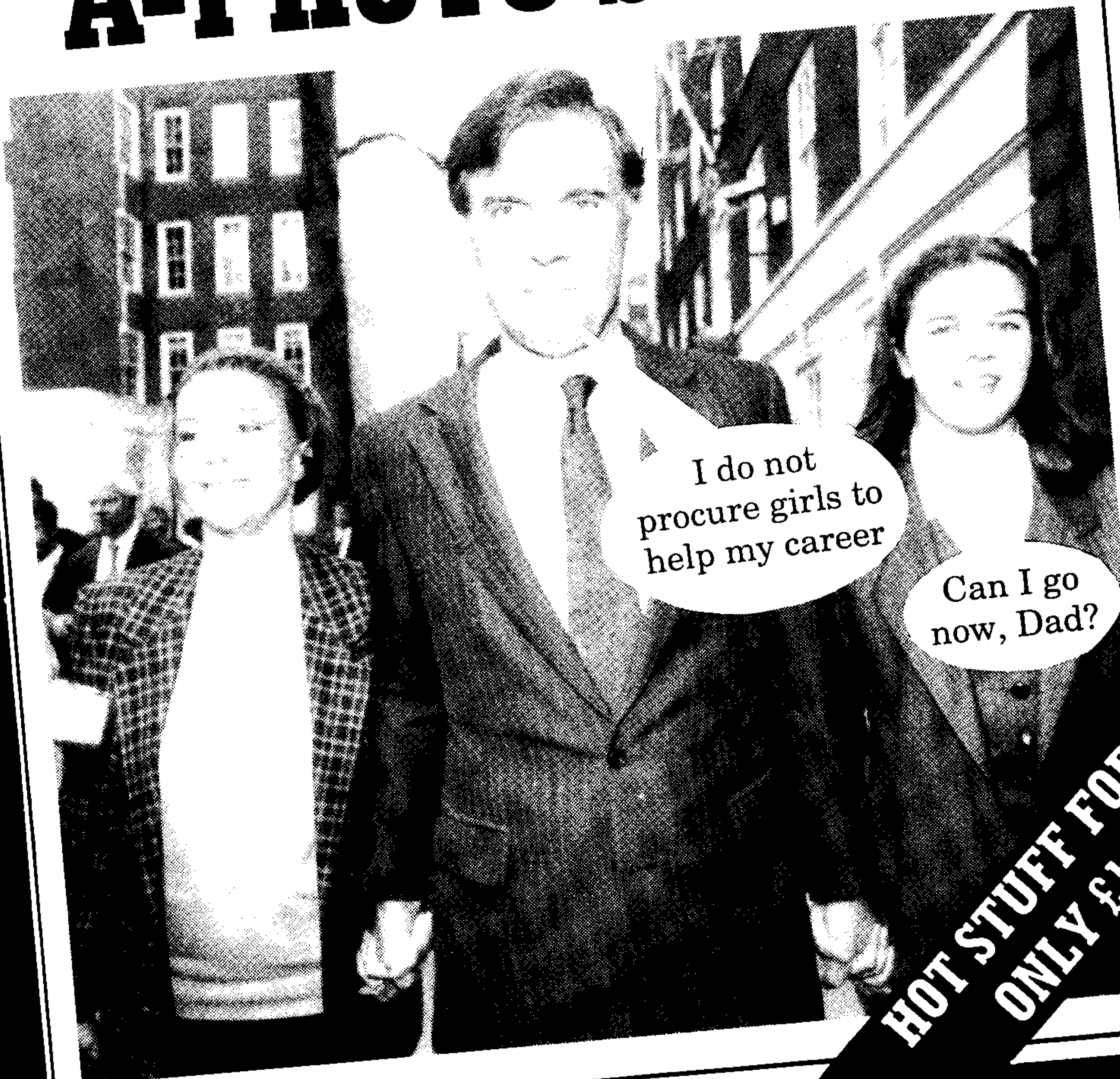
A FOUR-PAGE TRIBUTE TO JONATHAN AITKEN



No. 870
Friday
21 April '95

PRIVATE EYE

TORY THREE-IN- A-PHOTO SHOCK!



I do not
procure girls to
help my career

Can I go
now, Dad?

HOT STUFF FOR
ONLY £1

THE SHINING SWORD
OF TRUTH



& THE TRUSTY SHIELD
OF BRITISH FAIR PLAY

AITKEN'S LIES: THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

ANYONE who has read *Private Eye* over the last five years will have known perfectly well that the Rt Hon Jonathan Aitken is an accomplished and indefatigable liar.

There were many key articles: FICTION MASTERCLASS: LEARN THE AITKEN WAY (18 Nov 1994); CANDOUR CORNER (7 Apr 1995); SWORD OFF, AITKEN (21 Apr 1995); AN UNBELIEVABLE TORY, a two-parter (30 Jun 1995 and 12 Jan 1996); and CORK UP (9 Feb 1996). In these, and other untitled pieces, the following lies direct were exposed.

1 The affair with Carol Thatcher.

This was angrily denied as "completely untrue" by Aitken in 1977. It was admitted two years later.

2 The case of Mr Frank Machon, Glasgow haulier.

"We were unable to trace any direct dealings with Mr Machon and his company," Mr Aitken, then the minister for procurement (er, "defence" procurement, shurely?) told the House of Commons on 16 May 1992. Almost at once Mr Machon produced ministry of defence (MoD) documents dated 1988 which authorised him to store fuses and charges for artillery at an MoD depot in Andover.

3 The case of Astra, an arms company.

In June 1992, an MoD spokesman said: "Mr Aitken did not ask to be a member of the Astra main board." In September 1996, Aitken wrote in a statement for a House of Commons committee: "I telephoned Gerald James [chairman of Astra] to say that... I would be willing to become a non-executive director."

3 The case of the lawyers' lunch.

Eye 878 reported that Aitken had been invited to speak at a Commons lunch for up-and-coming Sheffield-based solicitors Dibb Lupton Broomhead. Aitken wrote, in *Eye* 880: "I do not know this firm." This surprised the firm's marketing director Stuart Benson, who said Aitken had agreed to speak at the lunch and that his name was on the invita-

tions. "Of course he knew who we were," said Mr Benson. "I spoke to him or his office the week before the lunch and confirmed the arrangements."

5 The case of the meeting in Paris in September 1993 with Said Ayas.

Aitken had originally told the *Guardian*: "I had no meeting with Mr Ayas." A few weeks later he agreed: "Yes. I did see Mr Ayas."

6 The case of Ayas's yacht Katamarino.

On 3 November 1994, the treasury issued a statement on behalf of its chief secretary, Jonathan Aitken. "At no stage was Mr Aitken on the Katamarino." An hour later this had changed to: "Mr Aitken has never been on a ten-day cruise on the Katamarino." The next day it had changed again to: "Mr Aitken and his family had dinner on board the yacht with an old family friend" [Mr Ayas].

7 The case of Project Lisi, the deal by BMARC to sell 140 20mm cannon to Singapore, whose navy had just 12 ships.

On 23 December 1994, Mr Aitken wrote: "To make the position absolutely clear, I had no knowledge whatsoever about Project Lisi." After BMARC papers about Project Lisi were published with Aitken's name on them, the MP's answer changed on 29 March 1995 to: "I have no recollection of Project Lisi or reading about it in company reports."

AITKEN'S WRIT: YAH BOO, SYKES!

ALL OF the above was published without any response from Aitken or his lawyers. On 26 February 1996, the *Eye*'s extensive coverage of the Scott report into the arms-to-Iraq scandal ended with a small item entitled: ANOTHER LITTLE LIE FROM JONATHAN AITKEN. The article noted Aitken's statement on the BBC's *Question Time* in June 1995: "Until I arrived on the board of BMARC in 1988 I had not been involved in the arms business"; and quoted a letter from Aitken in March 1985 to Gerald James, chairman of arms company Astra, about his influence in Saudi Arabia "in the defence field".

This drew a letter from Aitken's distinguished lawyer Richard Sykes, stating that Mr Aitken had told the complete truth on the television programme: "Mr Aitken has been seriously libelled," wrote Mr Sykes. He demanded a full apology and payment of legal costs within seven days — or, he went on, a libel writ would be issued. The *Eye* replied at length in print

(8 March 1996) noting that Aitken, long before his directorship of BMARC, had been deputy chairman of Security Centres Holdings plc, whose subsidiary "had the non-military name of Defence Systems International, chaired by the non-military Major General Viscount Monkton of Brenchley". There was no apology and no payment of legal costs. To the threat of a writ, the *Eye* replied: "Feel free".

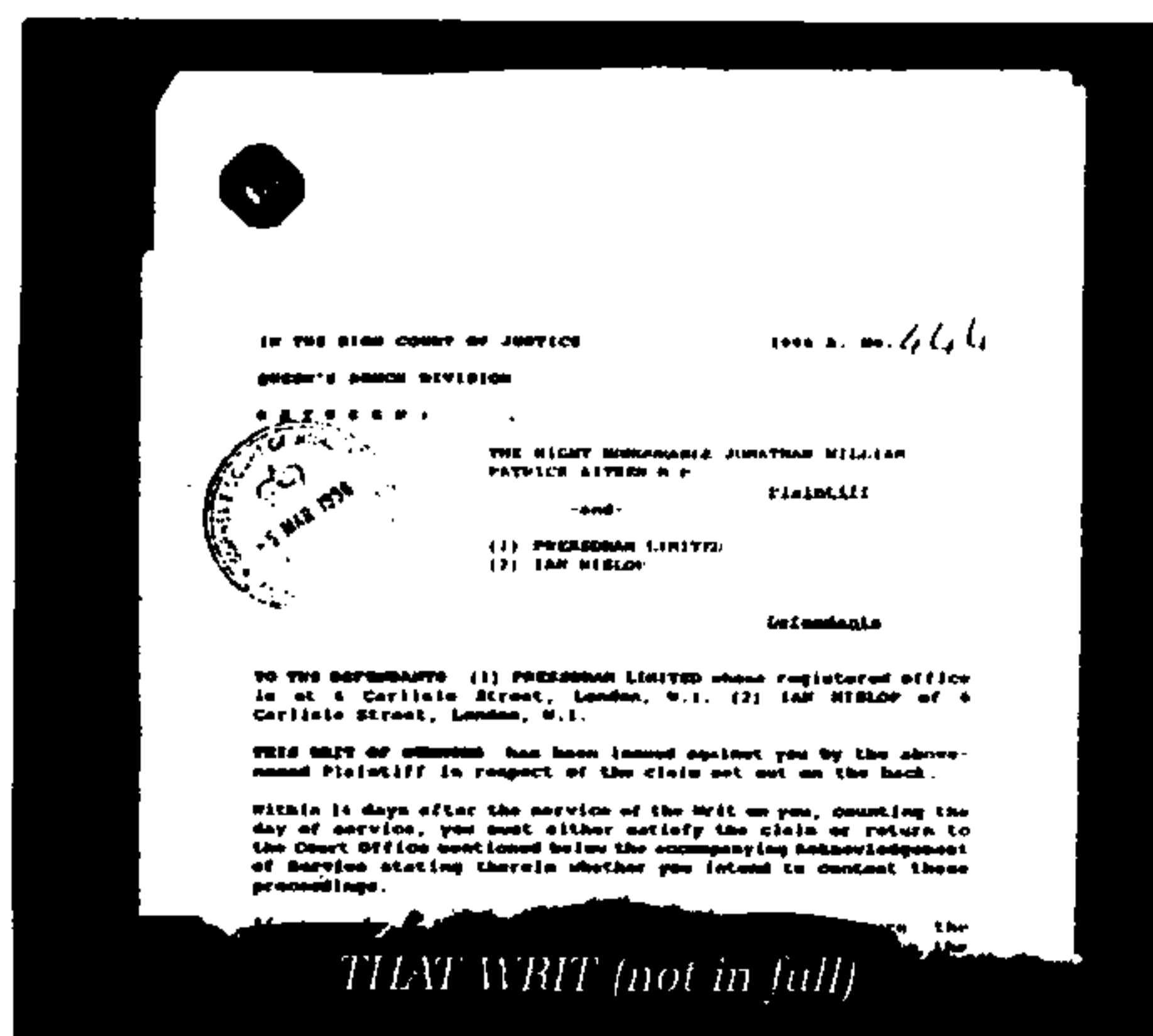
Sykes and Aitken responded immediately with a writ and a statement of claim alleging that "the plaintiff had told a deliberate lie on national television, and deceived viewers of the programme". As a result, the statement went on, "the plaintiff's reputation has been severely injured and he has suffered distress and embarrassment".

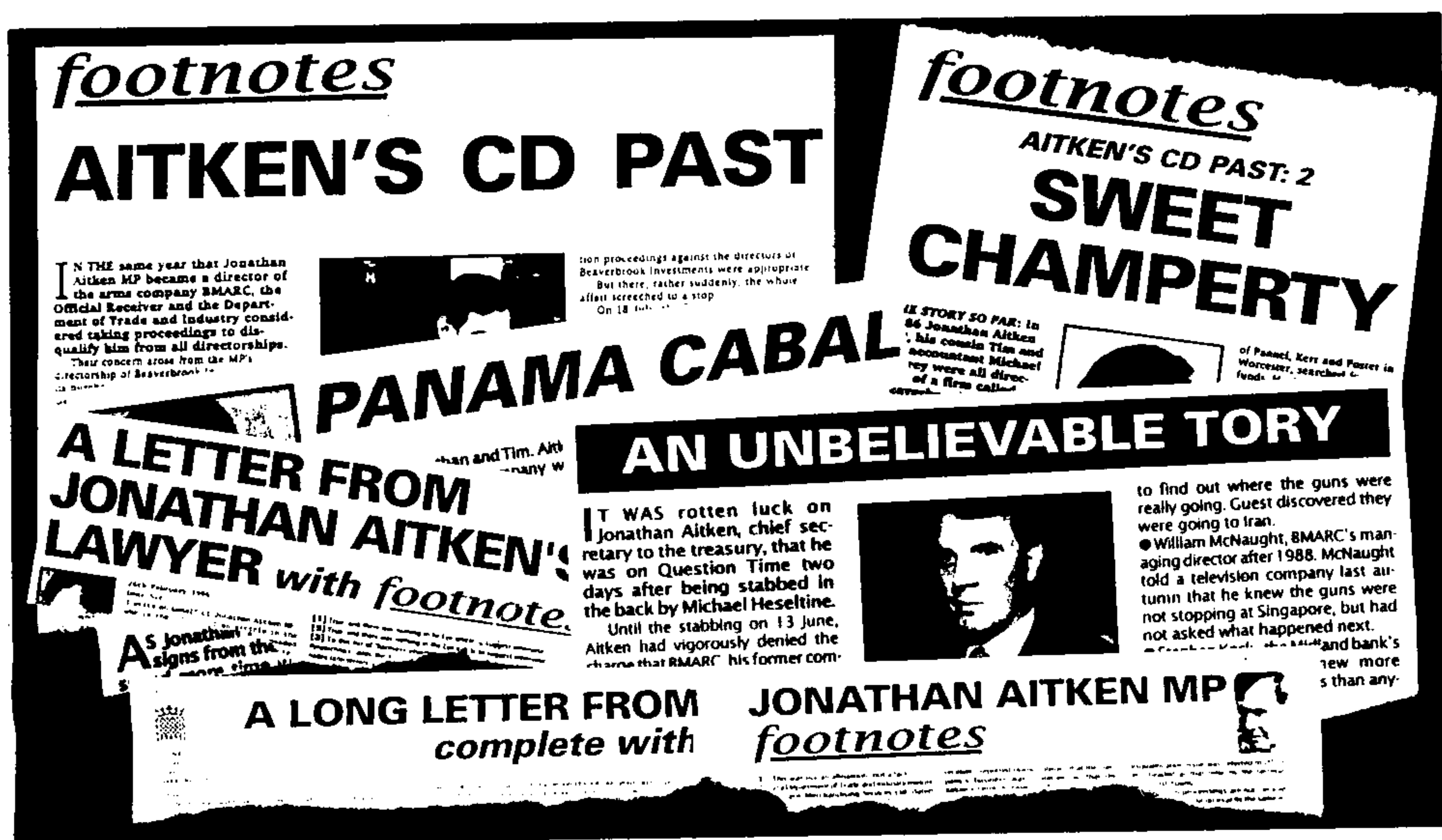
The claim continued: "The said article was accompanied by a cartoon of a knight in armour on horseback captioned: 'The shining sword of truth and trusty shield of British fair play'. The caption and cartoon were manifestly ironic in intent and calculated to bolster the allegation of dishonesty conveyed by the words complained of." The claim sought "damages, including aggravated damages"; an injunction to restrain any repetition of any words to the same

effect. The *Eye* replied with a defence setting out 10 public statements by Aitken which were "false to the plaintiff's knowledge".

Aitken's lawyers replied on 30 October last year, repeating the claim for aggravated damages. "The plaintiff will further rely on the contemptuous way in which the plaintiff's complaint has been treated by the defendants as evincing a clear determination on their part to vilify and ridicule the plaintiff." The *Eye* was accused of publishing the article "with the improper motive of damaging and discrediting the plaintiff and without any honest belief in its truth either knowing it to be false or at best with reckless disregard for its truth and accuracy."

All this was contested by the *Eye*, which prepared to defend the action without any admission, apology or payment into court. Recent events suggest that this case may never be tried. If it isn't, the *Eye* will certainly be pressing for full payment of legal costs.





AITKEN'S SEEDY PAST: THE FAILURE FROM PANAMA

ANYONE who has read the *Eye* over the last five years will also have known perfectly well that the Rt Hon Jonathan Aitken's business interests were seedy in the extreme.

The main articles were: AITKEN HUME AND CRY (19 Nov 1993); IN THE CITY by Slicker (2 and 16 Dec 1994); AITKEN'S CD PAST, parts I and II (28 Jul and 11 Aug 1995); and PANAMA CABAL (14 Jul 1995).

SLICKER exposed the grim record of Aitken's secondary bank, Aitken Hume, which was criticised in a 1988 report by the department of trade and industry (DTI) about illegal concert party share-buying in Equity & General for being "at the very least... insufficiently vigilant".

In 1991 the bank was fined £18,000 by the Securities and Futures Authority for illegally carrying out stockbroking business. The bank later came under the control of three shareholders: the Allied Group of Hong Kong, whose offices were raided in September 1993 by 300 Hong Kong policemen; Edward St George, chief executive of the Port Authority at Freeport, Grand Bahama, prime mover in the bust Lloyds syndicate Oakeley Vaughan; and Wafic Said, benefactor of Oxford University and close friend of the Thatcher family.

In the summer of 1995, the *Eye* received leaked documents which proved that another of Aitken's disastrous business enterprises had got him into serious trouble. The takeover and subsequent receivership of Oasis Merchandising Services by Beaverbrook Investments, Aitken's company, so shocked executives at the official receiver's office that in 1988 they insisted on a high-level meeting with the serious fraud office (SFO). There they strongly recommended a public examination of Jonathan Aitken and proceedings to disqualify him as a director. The meeting agreed to proceed with the disqualification. The action, the *Eye* reported, "got mysteriously lost in the mists of Whitehall".



When the creditors of Oasis clubbed together to sue Aitken and the other Beaverbrook directors for the money they had lost, Aitken's lawyers resorted to an ancient common law concept called "champerty" which knocks out an action if a third party can benefit from it. Thanks to a dubious judgment by Mr Justice Robert Walker, Aitken got away without paying the creditors a penny. Aitken replied to these articles with a long letter published in full in *Eye* 880 (8 Sep 1995), in which he wrote: "There could not have been any grounds upon which disqualification proceedings could have been contemplated against me." As the *Eye* pointed out, that view was not shared by the official receiver or the SFO.

A common feature of Aitken's business interests was their registration in patriotic tax havens like Panama and the Dutch Antilles. One interesting deal was the purchase of Investment Intelligence Ltd, 1991 by Aitken Investments SA for £29,900 and sold five months later to Aitken Hume plc for £363,000. The outside directors of Aitken Hume were not impressed with this blatant profiteering at their bank's expense, and did everything they could to find out who had benefited from it. So secretive were the authorities in Panama that the searches proved fruitless, but Jonathan Aitken's cousin Tim told an inquisitive journalist: "If you want to find out, you have to go and see the dear old prince down in Saudi Arabia."

to find out where the guns were really going. Guest discovered they were going to Iran. William McNaught, BMARC's managing director after 1988. McNaught told a television company last autumn that he knew the guns were not stopping at Singapore, but had not asked what happened next. and bank's new more s than any-

AITKEN'S FRIENDS: THE SHEIKS, THE SPOOKS, THE SELECT COMMITTEES

IF AITKEN's appalling record was so transparent, how did he manage to survive for so long? There are four main answers.

Friends in the media

Throughout this entire story, Jonathan Aitken has been studiously defended, and often worshipped, by most of the media. His notorious "sword of truth" speech at Tory central office was almost universally acclaimed. The headline in the *Daily Mail* the following day lambasted the "wicked lies" of Granada Television and the *Guardian*.

The *Express* and *Evening Standard* consistently took the same line. Paul Johnson in the *Mail* and Taki in the *Sunday Times* again and again denounced the press attacks on their hero. Andrew Neil, then editor of the *Sunday Times*, called the *Guardian* "a salacious scandal sheet". Individual journalists who criticised Aitken, like David Hellier at the *Independent* and Richard Donkin of the *Financial Times*, were taken off the case (*Eye*, 5 June 1992).

Tim Laxton, who supplied the *Independent* with its scoop about Aitken's company BMARC and its sale of guns to Iran, was attacked on the front page of the *Times* in a piece by leading Aitken-supporter Andrew Pierce. Pierce alleged Laxton had "audited the BMARC accounts": a complete fabrication and almost exactly the opposite of the truth.

In May 1996, the *Sunday Telegraph* apologised for the mildest possible criticism of Aitken, and paid him damages and legal costs. The *Independent* (which claimed on the day of the Granada/*Guardian* victory that it "is vigorously contesting" a libel action from Aitken) forgot to mention the £30,000 it has paid into court.

And even when their knight was exposed as a scoundrel, some of these champions were still reluctant to hit him when he was down. The *Express*, for instance, almost forgot to mention its hero's humiliation; and the *Daily Mail* led its front page with a scoop on quite another



bombshell matter... er: CHARLES AND CAMILLA: COULD THEY MARRY? The *Mail on Sunday* followed with a two-page spread devoted to Aitken's mum and her chivalrous blaming of Jonathan's wife for his difficulties.

Friends in the House

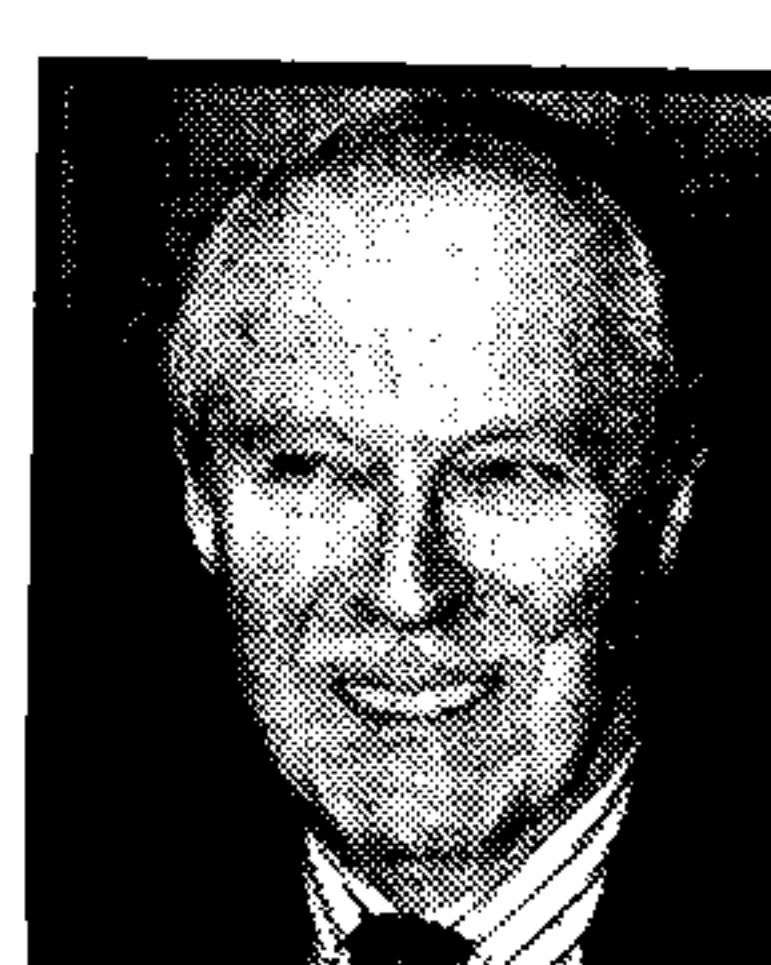
Whenever the sky has darkened over Jonathan Aitken he has been able to rely on the loyal support of fellow MPs of all persuasions. When he was forced to resign from the cabinet in the summer of 1995, the House of Commons trade and industry select committee solemnly undertook an investigation.

The prospects for the then Tory MP for Thanet South looked bleak. No less an authority than the president of the board of trade (soon to be deputy prime minister) Michael Heseltine had told the Commons that gun exports by BMARC could have gone (illegally) to Iran. This theory was vigorously supported by the chairman of BMARC at the time, Gerald James, and another director John Anderson. All the other directors of BMARC who gave evidence to the committee made it clear that they did not think the exported guns were really bound for Singapore, as Aitken pretended.

The select committee was advised by Mr Michael Brindle QC, who reported: "In view of the fact that Mr Aitken received a remuneration of £10,000 pa, it appears that there must have been some services expected of him. It is arguable that more onerous, positive duties on non-executive directors would be recognised in all circumstances under English law." Mr Brindle concluded that on these grounds "the committee might be able to criticise Mr Aitken for his conduct". Somehow, however, the committee managed to produce a unanimous report completely whitewashing Aitken. Its technique was to smear his main accuser, Gerald James, as "a highly unreliable witness".

The committee members had taken their cue from their parliamentary colleague, Jonathan Aitken, who had told them: "Mr James is no longer capable of distinguishing fact from fiction or fantasy from reality... He should be taken off to the funny farm, or he

Mr James is no longer capable of distinguishing fact from fiction or fantasy from reality... He should be taken off to the funny farm, or he should be put on a charge of perjury



FIVE GO WHITEWASHING: MPs who cleared Aitken, Martin O'Neill, Joan Walley, Roger Berry, Keith Hampson and Sir Anthony Grant

should be put on a charge of perjury." The committee believed the liar and insulted the man who told the truth. (See AITKEN: THE SMEARING AND CLEARING — *Eye*, 26 June 1996.)

Aitken had some very special friends in the House of Commons. Alan "Dipstick" Duncan, now chief aide to the new Tory leader, seldom lost a chance to leap to Jonathan's aid and denounce what he called "the sleaze hunters of Fleet Street" (*Eye*, 4 Nov 1994). The recently-elected chairman of the Tory backbench 1922 committee Sir Archie Hamilton, one of the few MPs with even more business interests than Aitken, even called for a press clampdown on the Aitken affair (*Eye*, 21 Apr 1995). Other Aitken enthusiasts are Alan Clark, who described his friend as "my stand-by in many a dirty trick", and John Bercow, Aitken's former special adviser.

Friends in intelligence

Alan Clark, now the MP for Kensington, has described with his usual panache his visit to a mysterious but very high-powered conference in Oman almost immediately after John Major took over as leader of the Tory party in 1990. The conference was called by a secret society called Cercle.

"The entire outing," explained Clark, "is a right-wing think (or rather thought) tank, funded by the CIA, which churns Cold war concepts around." Jonathan Aitken was also on the trip. "There is," wrote Clark, "a distinguished attendance list and Jonathan Aitken, who knows absolutely everybody in the world, has, amusingly and indiscreetly guided one through it."

Aitken's Houdini-like career in which he has until now continually escaped from disaster, owed a lot to his close association with the intelligence services, especially MI6. At every crisis in his life — his prosecution under the official

secrets act in 1970; his escape unscathed from the collapsed Slater Walker in the mid-1970s; his unpunished breach of commercial television law in 1981; his avoiding prosecution or disqualification proceedings over the Equity & General or Oasis scandals of 1988 — he has dodged away in the nick of time with the help of his close associates in intelligence. At his darkest hour, when the *Guardian* published their allegations, MI6 dredged up and leaked an old connection between Richard Gott of the *Guardian* and the Russian KGB — a connection which the spooks had promised Gott they would never reveal.

Even in his recent troubles, strange and secret forces have rallied to his aid. *Eye* 899 (31 May 1996) told the story of the weird approach to Robin Kirk, a crucial witness for the *Guardian* and Granada in the recent libel case. One evening a woman called at Kirk's house and said she was doing research on witnesses in big cases. She said she knew he was going to be a witness in the Aitken case and questioned him closely on his state of mind about his evidence. Suspicious, Mr Kirk tried to contact the business on the card she had given him. There was no such business. The *Eye* tracked down the telephone number she'd given to a rented barn near Reading, and from there to a Mr Steven McIntyre who said he does "research for solicitors". He agreed he'd sent the woman to Kirk's house but refused to say who had instructed him or why. The *Eye* asked Aitken's solicitor if he had had anything to do with this strange episode, but there was no reply.

Friends in Riyadh

By far the most powerful force protecting Jonathan Aitken has been the Saudi royal family. Dazzled by his charm and poise, the Saudi royals selected Aitken years ago as their chief British bagman and spokesman.

The wealth they made available to him easily compensated for the disasters of his own financial enterprises. To his Saudi friends — Prince Mohammed, son of the king;

Said Ayas; and above all to the Syrian-born entrepreneur Wafic Said — Mr Aitken owes not only his fortune but also his political promotion.

In May this year the British newspapers floated a story, whose uncertain source was Mohamed Fayed, owner of Harrods, that Jonathan Aitken was made minister of defence procurement in 1992 because the Saudi government had insisted on it. This much-heralded scoop had been better told in the *Eye* two years previously (19 May 1995).

Before the 1992 election, John Major had promised faithful backbencher Sir Ivan Lawrence the post of minister for defence procurement. After the election, Lawrence waited for the call — but it never came. Major wrote to apologise. The reason was that the Saudi government had protested that the new defence secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, was Jewish and so was Lawrence. The future of the multi-billion dollar Al Yamamah deal was in jeopardy, they said, unless their favourite, Jonathan Aitken, got the job.

Aitken's appointment was the second success for the Saudis in a few weeks. Just before the election they had "persuaded" the British government not to publish the report of the national audit office (NAO) on the Al Yamamah arms deals.

The report discusses the extent of commissions on deals made with the Saudi royals. With Aitken in office, the deal was safe. Discussions could start on the next stage — the contract for 48 Tornado aircraft, which was clinched in April 1993. A few months later, Aitken made his secret visit to meet Said Ayas and other Saudi friends in Paris. Why did he lie so recklessly about this visit? Why did he insist so ludicrously that he was not on business? Why did he invent such unlikely journeys for his wife and daughter? Could it possibly have been that the crucial subject for discussion that September weekend in Paris was the distribution of commissions on the Tornados — at the standard rate of about £15m per aircraft? Perhaps we should be told.

The Eye Says: Sword Off, Aitken!

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

A LETTER FROM THE VICAR

PHEW! What a busy week it's been!

As some of you know, I went to Amsterdam for a very important ecumenical conference, with parish leaders all over Europe! And they all had lots of exciting ideas which kept us up all night!

The conference theme was very much "Working Together Towards A Shared Future" which I supported entirely, except that I had to make it clear that we must always be careful not to lose sight of our individual identity! As I told the other delegates to the conference: "We are all equal in the sight of the Almighty, but that doesn't mean we have to be the same!"

I am happy to say that my contribution was very well received! And if you read the joint-report on the conference (copies available from Mr Cook!) you'll find that your vicar had a pretty strong hand in what we all agreed!

Not that our time in Amsterdam was all work and no play! We were given a trip on one of the famous canals and some of us even had a fun bicycle race! Modesty prevents me from saying who won, but it was me! (Cherie tells me I'm getting big-headed so perhaps I shouldn't have put that bit in!)

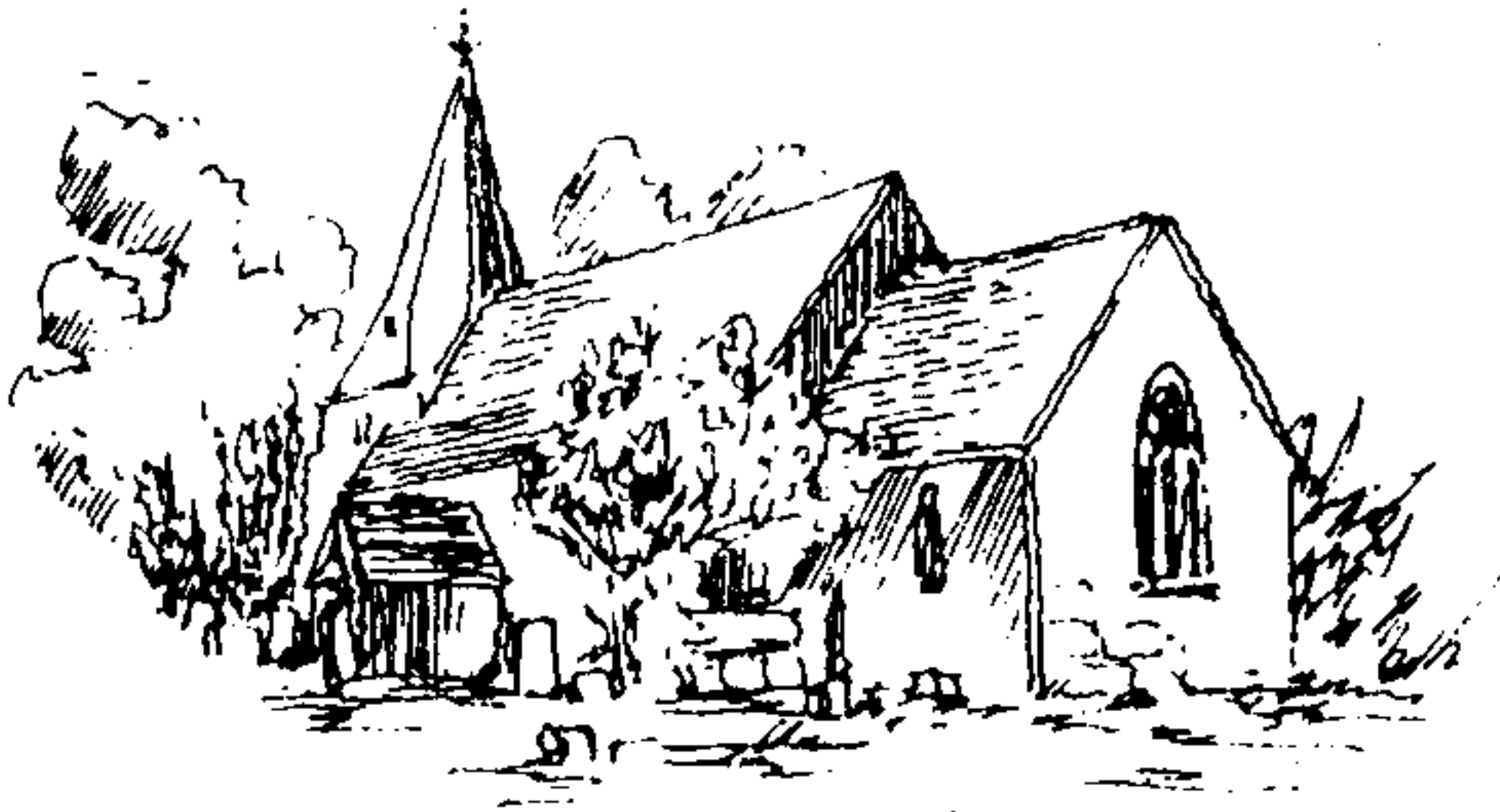
Anyway, here's a photograph of me winning!



THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST!

On the home front, I have to admit that I was disappointed by the poor response to the idea of a special St Albion's contribution to the great Millennium Celebrations.

As you know, Mr Rogers, the local surveyor, has kindly offered to put up a temporary marquee on the wasteland next to the cemetery. At very little cost we could stage all sorts of exciting events, such as an exhibition of local arts and crafts, a painting competition for children, and a concert of "St Albion's Through The Ages", featuring song and dance contributions from all sections of the



community, including our senior citizens' Daycare Centre Festival Choir, the Brownies' Steel Band and an enormous Millennium Cake with 2000 candles, baked by Mr Rogers's very talented wife Ruthie!

And yet with all this vision on offer, you can imagine how sorry I was to hear that there was so little enthusiasm for our project. There have even been voices in the parish suggesting that the whole thing is too expensive and that we should spend the money on putting central heating into the primary school toilets!

Well, really! Man does not live by bread alone, you know! Didn't someone once say "O ye (you) of little faith"! If my son Euan can see the point of it all, it's pretty feeble if other people can't! As Mr Mandelson put it so persuasively, we are all going to agree on this project whether we agree or not!

Sorry to end on such a preachy note, but I know you'll all thank me in the end!

Yours,

Tony



To Remember In Your Prayers

MR WAREING, who gave such interesting talks on Yugoslavia last year. We think Bob needs to look into his heart as to whether he has really been honest and open with us over his business affairs. Far be it from us to be judgmental until all the facts are known. But in the meantime, it would perhaps be best if he stays away from Church.

T.B.

Sunday School Corner

One day the disciples were out fishing. They threw their nets on one side of the boat, but they caught nothing. Our Lord said to them, "Try your nets on the other side." And they did so, but still there were no fish. And Peter said, "All the fish have gone. Someone must have taken our quota." And Our Lord said, "That's life."

Next Sunday: The Parable of the Loaves and No Fishes

TB

Verses From a Local Poet

(We are very fortunate that this week's contribution comes from the vicar himself, and we apologise to those whose poems have had to be held over.)

Alistair Campbell, Editor)

Bridges

In Amsterdam there are bridges
Everywhere,
Over the canals.
They bring people from both sides
Together.
Are we bridges?

Rev A. Blair

A Message From Our Churchwarden, Mr Mandelson

Mr Prescott from the Working Men's Club has asked me to apologise to everyone on his behalf for his very foolish mistake in leaving the minutes of the PCC lying around so that irresponsible people could read them. This has led to a lot of misunderstanding, particularly over our plans to sell off the crypt to developers. We have no such plans, and even if we do, it is not the business of anyone outside the PCC to know about them at this stage. Tony was rightly very upset, and we are agreed that we all have to be much more careful about this sort of thing in the future, particularly Mr Prescott.

Also please note:

- The use of mobile phones on church premises is from now on forbidden.
- In response to many requests, we are also introducing a strict no-smoking policy in the coffee area (About time too! TB).
- Mr Foster's talk on "Our Brother Fox – The Case Against Hunting" has not been postponed after all. This may change again – so watch this space for further directions.



FROM THE CHAIRMAN^{PM} OF THE GOVERNORS OF ST ALBION'S CHURCH SCHOOL, MR BLUNKETT

I am pleased to say that I have taken urgent steps to introduce a new, much healthier menu at school dinners. From now on, children will be given a much wider choice — viz lentilburgers with beans or beanburgers with lentils, followed by yoghurt with muesli or muesli with yoghurt. They can then choose an apple to finish. I am sure all parents will approve. *(I certainly do! TB)*

DB

HAGUE NAMES NEW TEAM

by Our Westminster
Staff Lunchtime O'No-I-Said-
It-Would-Be-Clarke

WILLIAM HAGUE, the youngest Tory leader since Tony Blair, last night announced what he called "a fresh new look to the Shadow Cabinet".

Out go dull, tired old figures like Peter Lilley, Michael Howard, John Redwood and Dr Brian Mawhinney. In come exciting new faces like Peter Lilley, Michael Howard, John Redwood and Dr Brian Mawhinney.

And Hague has gone even

further in his desire for "a new broom to inject some fresh blood into the hot potato of the Conservative party".

This is his exciting Shadow Cabinet:

- In as Chairman of the party comes the youthful 98 year old wunderkind **Cecil Parkinson**. His job will be to try and stand up.

- In as Lord Chancellor comes **Lord Hailsham**, 132, who aims to bring both his experience and his zimmer frame to the Shadow Cabinet.

- In as Minister for the Armed Forces comes the late **Sir Winston Churchill**, 160. Though dead he will bring "a real breath of new life to the party" says Hague.

- The **Duke of Wellington**, 231, is to be Shadow Foreign Minister. A known Eurosceptic and victor of Waterloo, his ashes will sit at the next EC summit on the Maastricht convergence criteria.

- **Boadicea**, who looks not a day older than her 1,873 years, was the former MP for Icen North (later to become Finchley South after boundary changes). She will be joining Hague's team as an advisor on policy and will tell the Prime Minister exactly what to do.

Hague told reporters afterwards: "This team is sending out a very strong message. We are the opposition party of the future."

ADVERTISEMENT

New from McDonalds

The Sixty Thousand Pounder

A new sensation from the World's
Biggest Litigation Chain!

(Available at selected courts throughout the UK)



Ingredients:
2 small fries

One enormous
bun-ch of bastards

Hard cheese
Burger off

Order now — ready in less than two years and served by
unfriendly professional lawyers.

**There's a defence at McDonalds
you won't enjoy!**

BLAIR'S ASTONISHING AMSTERDAM TRIUMPH

by Our Political Staff Alistair Campbell (as dictated to all newspapers)

TONY Blair yesterday pulled off one of the most astounding political coups since Hannibal invaded the Alps (writes Alistair Campbell, the man they can't gag).

From the land of tulips and windmills came the news that Tony had signed the treaty that makes Magna Carta look like a menu from McDonalds (writes Alistair Campbell, the man who tells it like it isn't).

Here are just some of the astonishing victories that Tony won after two days and nights of hand-to-hand combat with some of the most ruthless political gangsters the world has seen since Genghis Khan put one over Al Capone in the first round (writes Al Campbell, the politician the pundits ring up when they want

to be told what to say).

- Britain to keep right to drive on left until 2005.

- A last-minute reprieve for London's famous red buses.

- English to remain official language of Great Britain "for foreseeable future".

- Postponement of EU's compulsory shopping-trolley driving test until 2007.

- Britain to keep 50% of the Single European Fish.

- Britain's prime minister to be allowed to win humorous bicycle race in return for signing the Social Chapter.

No wonder (writes Alistair Campbell) the rest of Europe were last night reeling in admiration at the man they are calling "El Pushover" (surely 'the Iron Man of Islington'? Ed)

DAILY MAIL



Peter McLie — The
Only Columnist In
The World Worse
Than Himself

I NOTICE that Private Eye has stopped publishing its popular John Major's Diary feature.

Why on earth should they have done that?

For my money it was the only good thing in the magazine.

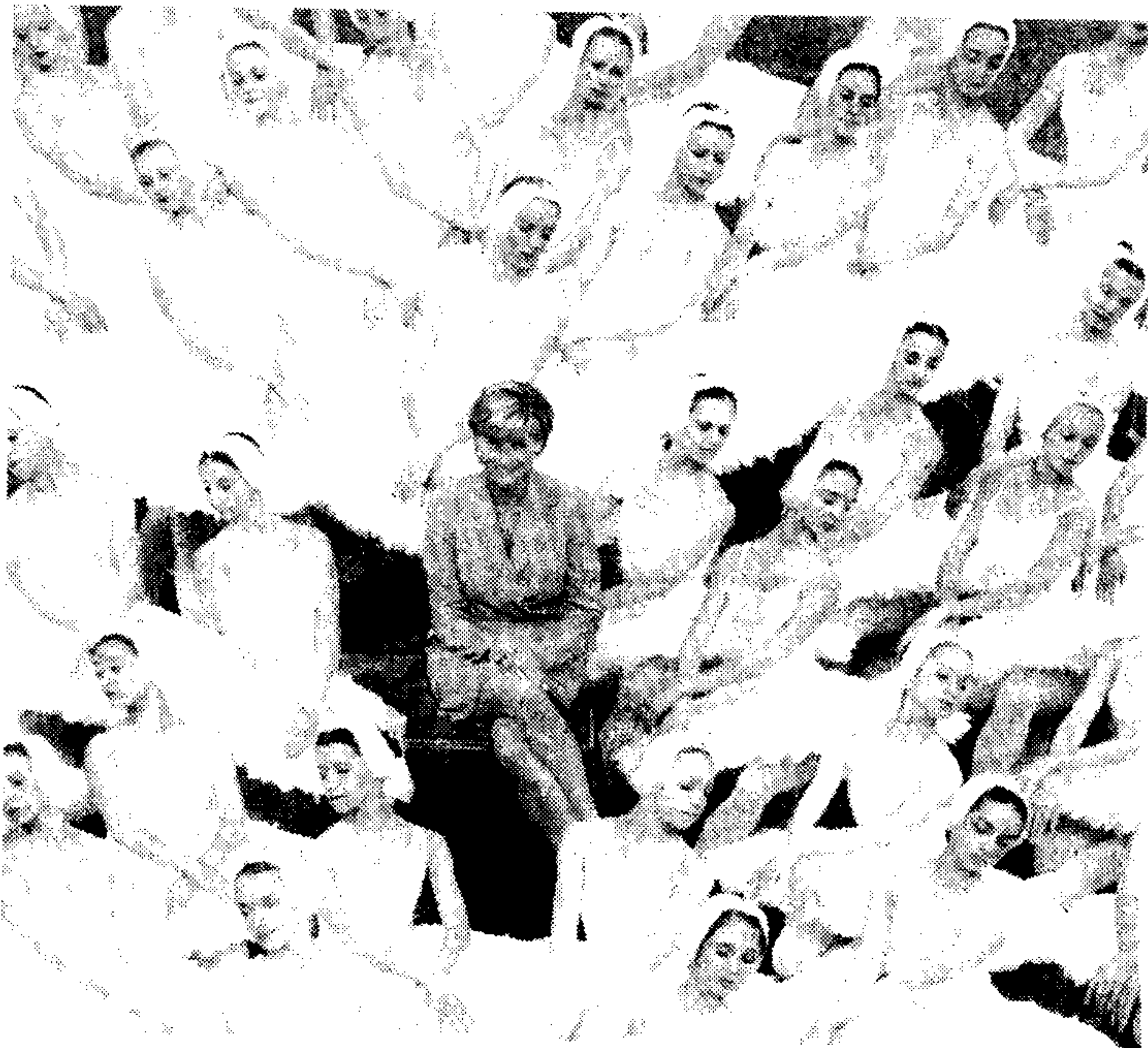
They should bring it back at

once, otherwise they may lose that reputation for biting satire which they enjoyed when I worked there!

I have a further suggestion for these young upstarts.

Why don't they rename their weekly dig at the prime minister "The Secret Diary of a Trouser Press"? (You're fired. Ed.)

DIANA'S NEW DEODORANT FAILS TO IMPRESS



Yes! It's Britain's Newest Fanzine

BLAIRZONE

(in association with Times Newspapers)

Tony's Thoughts
on our
Responsibility
to the Planet
Ob-Bla-Di, Ob-Bla-Da, Life
Goes On, Wo-o-ah!...
See what I mean?

Blairzone Scoop!

YES, it's official. Top drummer Charlie "Appalling" Windsor is set to join Blairzone! Charlie, formerly pigskin pummeller with supergroup The Queen tells us exclusively: "I really dig the Blairzone beat. I'd really like to be as popular as Tony... er... sort of... wow-thingie!"

Says the artist formally known as Prince of Wales: "Tony and I make the same sort of music. We've got the same message for the kids of today. It's basically:

- Chill out!
- Hang loose!



The King (Future) of Rock 'n' Roll — banging his drum!

- Reintroduce a disciplined learning environment based on traditional methods.

Charlie will join the band for the world tour, including dates in Balmoral and Hong Kong (to be confirmed).

Chaz 'n' Tone Linx

Chaz Luvz

- The Three Degrees
- Phil Collins
- The Spice Girls
- The Book of Common Prayer

Tone Luvz

- Hawkwind
- The Harum (Procul)
- The Spice Girls
- The Book of Common Prayer

SPOOKEEE?! Eh?

Tony Sez

What Tony's Listening to NOW!

- The Privatised Velvet Underground — All Tomorrow's Parties
- Our House (Is Worth £615,000) — Madness
- Blairway to Heaven — Led-Free Zeppelin

In the words of the late great Grateful Floyd: "Hey Teacher — don't leave those kids alone!"

- Fanfare for a Common Agricultural Policy — Emerson, Winelake & Farmer
- Dr Feelgood Factor (Greatest Hits of the Last 25 Days)
- Adam Smith (shurely 'Adam Ant'? Ed)



Fanz Ask

Q: Who was that playing sax on your jam session in London?

A: It was top US horn-man "Wild" Billy Clinton of Credence Whitewater Revival fame.

NAOMI TOOK 'HUGE OVERDOSE' SHOCK

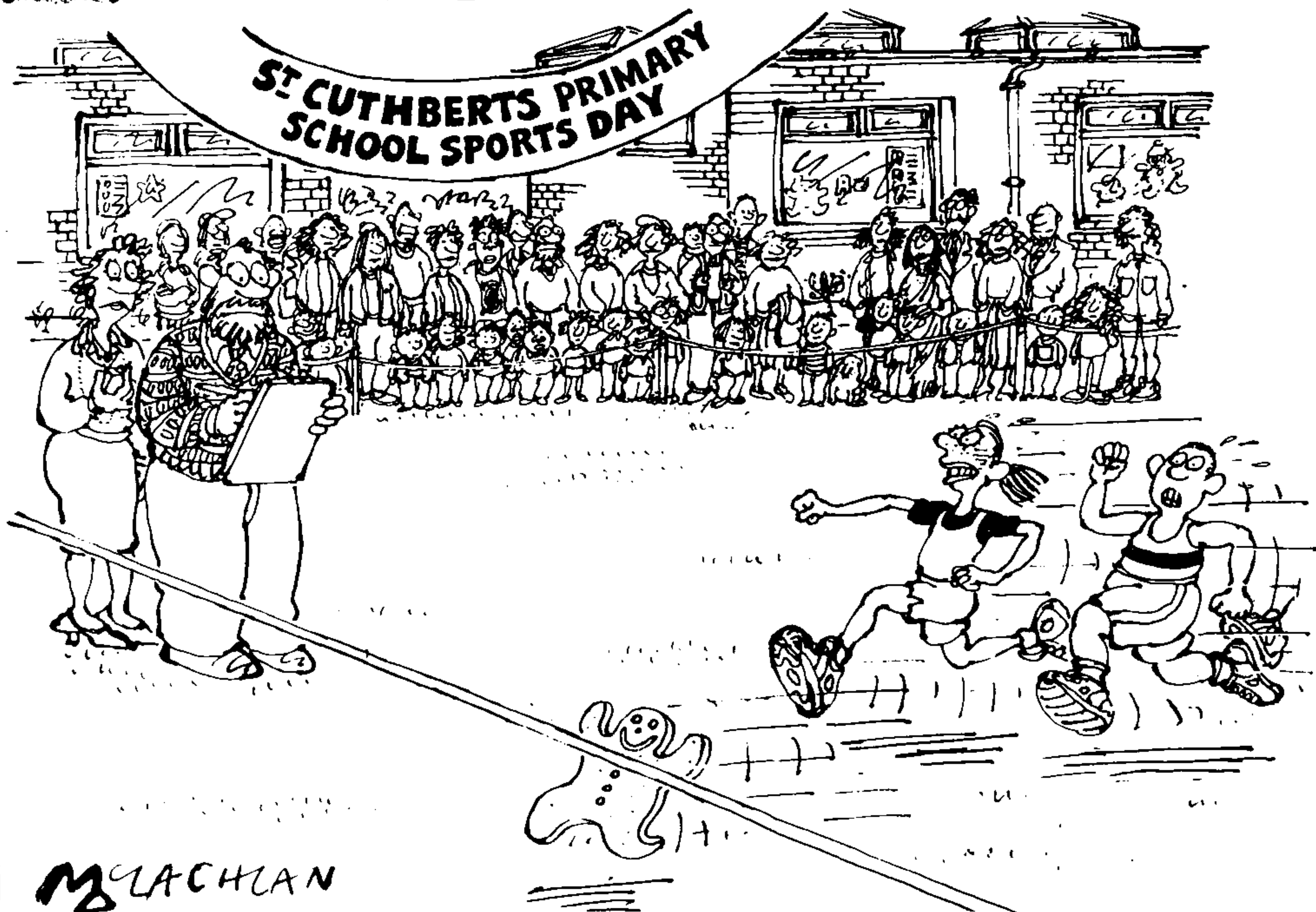
by Our Medical Staff

THE world-famous model Miss Naomi Campbell, 22, took a huge overdose of publicity yesterday, according to sources close to her agent.

"From what we gather, she had 300 front pages followed by a couple of thousand stories later on the same day.

"It was critical," continued the source, "but she is now out of danger of being forgotten."

Joaquin Cortes is 93.



WORLD'S FIRST NUDE VIOLINIST

'Not a
gimmick'
says promoter

by Our Classical Music Staff Sir Henry Kelly, FM

THE MANAGER of the sensational new 19-year-old performer from Scandinavia, Miss Linda Söftørn, last night denied allegations that his protegee was being cynically marketed as a classical musician rather than as "a blonde with no clothes on".

Said Len Filth of the promoters, The Really Filthy Company: "Linda is a first-rate raunchy babe who just happens to play the violin to concert level. She would be a star without the violin and it is unfair to say that it has helped her in the serious business of getting her kit off."

Skinlandia

Miss Söftørn has already recorded her first CD, entitled "For CD Men", which features the talented blonde taking off her



clothes whilst incidentally playing some of the world's most beautiful music.

She has also been acclaimed by world-famous musical expert Lord Andrew Lloyd-Webber: "Don't be fooled by the classical music," said Lloyd-Website. "This is an internationally recognised naked lady at work."

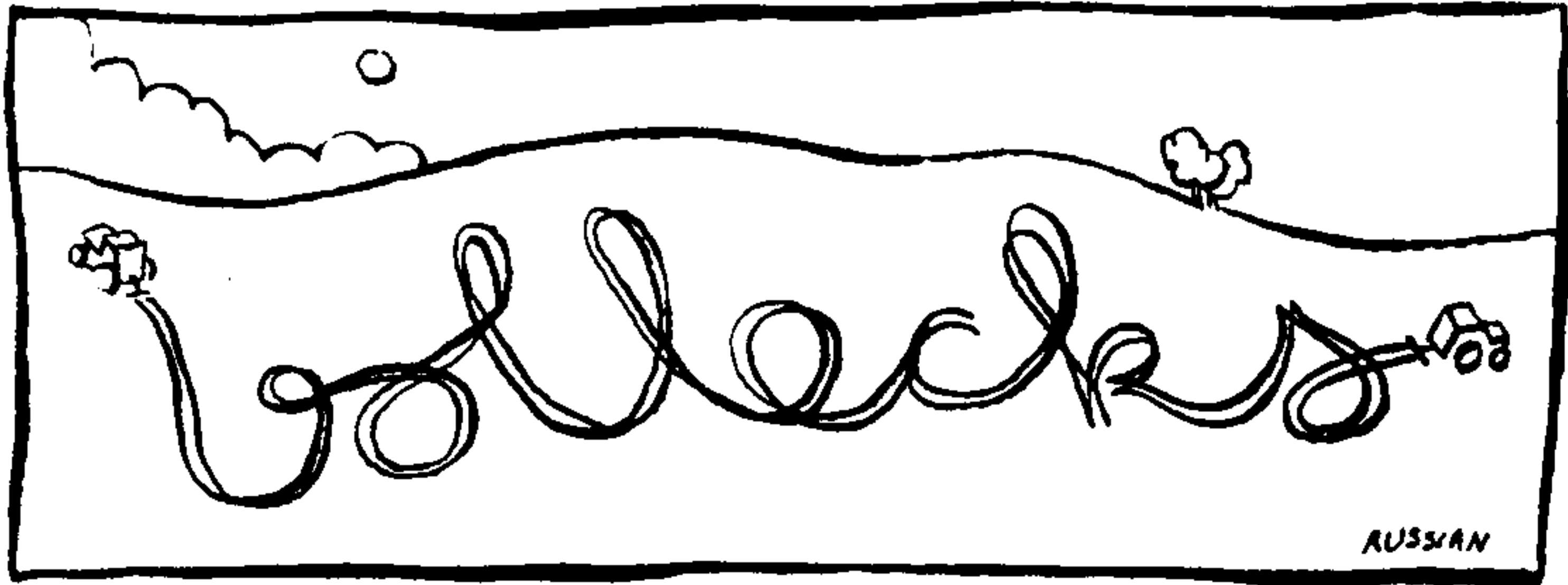
WHAT YOU WILL HEAR

- Beethoven's Violin Concerto (takes off dress)
- Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto (takes off Brahms. Shome mishtake shurely?)
- Air on a G-String (takes off money to the bank)

Special video version available in Brown Paper Bag or visit Linda's website at www.violinporn.phworrr.co.uk



"I'd like to become a lapsed Catholic, please"



Ploughmen Behaving Badly

FURY AT 'RIDICULOUS' TURNER PRIZE WINNER

by Our Art Staff Maurice and Charles Vasaatchi

THE ART world was rocked to its foundations last night when it was announced that the winner of this year's prestigious £20 million Turner Prize was an enormous paper sculpture by the hitherto-unknown Egyptian artist Mohamed al-Fayed.

The work, entitled "Unsold", consists of a mile-high "pillar", made up of copies of the humorous magazine Punch.

Tate Worse Than Death

The Port Said-born artist said that he got the inspiration for his prizewinning work during a visit to his local branch of W.H. Smith, where he saw a large pile of unwanted copies.

But art critics were quick to point out that Mr al-Fayed's

paper-stack was "far too accessible" to win the award.

"It is ridiculous," said leading art critic Richard Corked, giving Britain's most prestigious art prize to a pile of magazines — it should go to something really silly, like it usually does."

He continued: "The message of 'Unsold' is far too obvious — i.e. that no one wants to buy Punch. The meaning of a work of art should be indecipherable, even to the artist."

Mr al-Fayed was nevertheless celebrating his win last night by starting work on "a companion piece" entitled "Unsold II" which, he says, will be "a million miles high and visible from the planet Jupiter".

Anthea Turner is 22.



William Jefferson Hague

William the Conqueror
|
William Squitt the Elder
|
William Squitt the Younger
|
Just William
|
William Vague



William Jefferson Clinton

President Thomas Jefferson
|
Jefferson Airplane
|
Jefferson Bernard Is Unwell
|
Fred Clintstone
|
President Legover

Fact

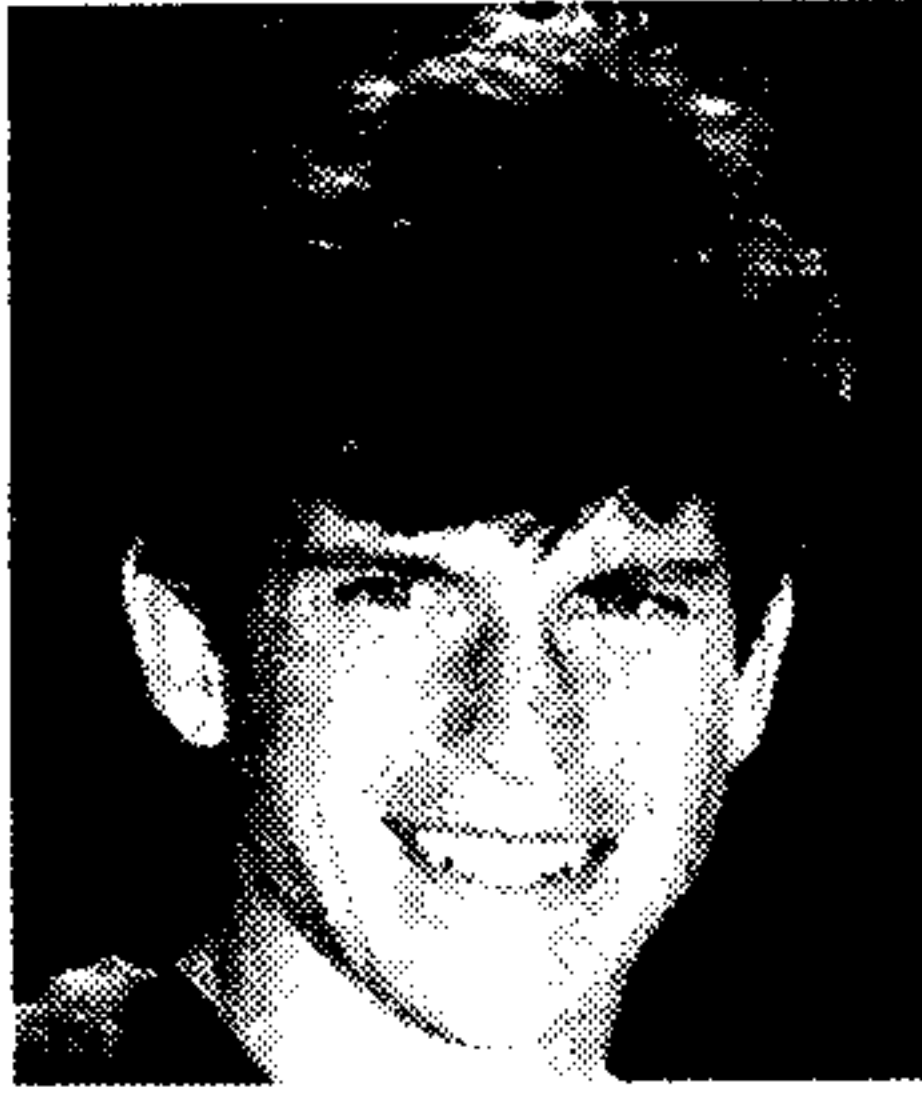
Hague was born in 1992, the same year that Clinton was elected, and his parents, both admirers of the new President, called their infant son 'William Jefferson' in his honour.



The Spice Girls CBE



Lord Wallace of Gromit



Sir Timothy Henman

NEW POPULAR BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Honours in full (cont from p. 49)

for services to HMSO (Sudbury); **Ms P.F.B. Mildington-Furrows**, Chief Supervisor, Internal Post and Communications, The Treasury; **Mr S.R.L. Hubcap**, Official Chauffeur to the Secretary of the Board of Trade.

DHL (Colonies)

J.M.B. Alcopop, Head of the Island Bus Company, St Bruno's;

R.R. Frangipani, Chief Surveyor, Department of the Interior, Bountibar; **Mrs F.C. Goodi-Goodi Gummadrop**, Warden of the Turtle Sanctuary, The Euston Archipelago.

KC (and the Sunshine Band)

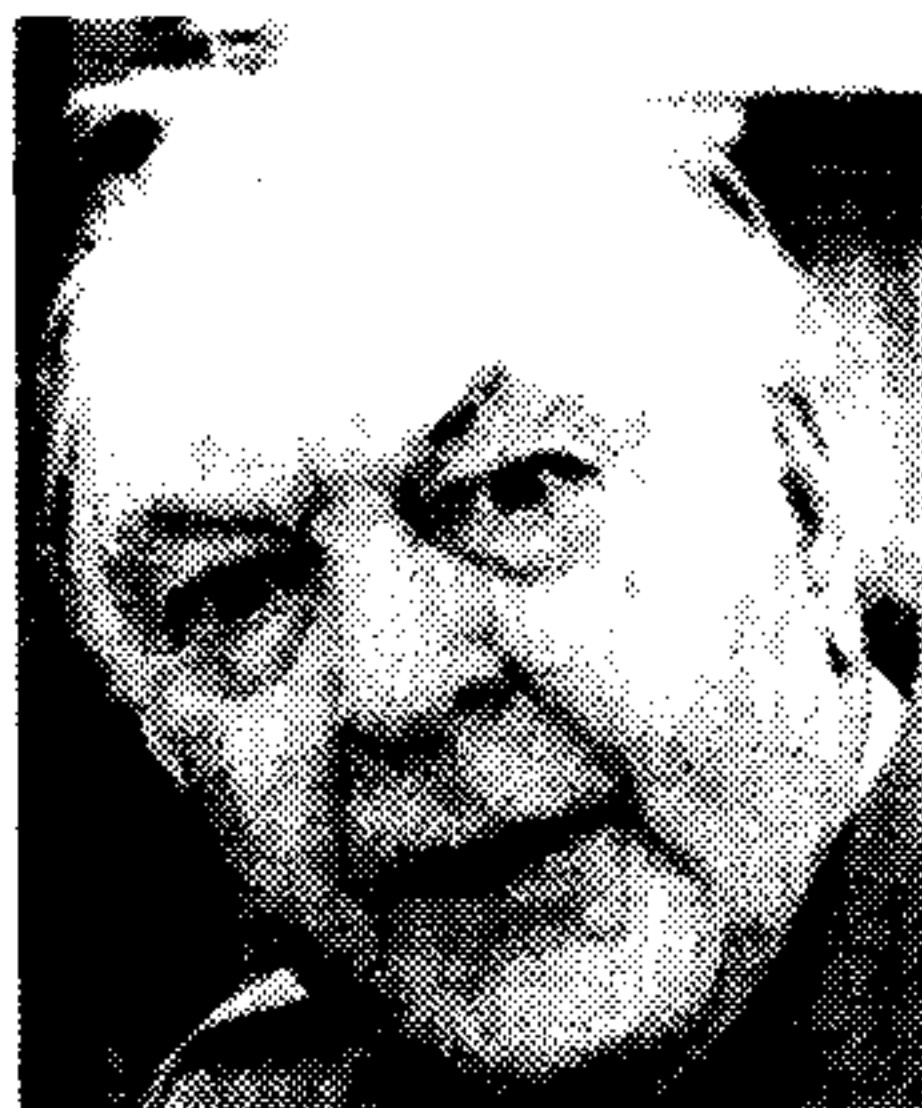
Sir William Wonker, 2nd Commercial Secretary to the Woodwind Islands Trade Mission (1965-66); **Sir Trevor Trumpet-Smythe**, Assistant Acting Permanent Secretary to the Antarctic Federation (Munich); **Lady Petronella Umbrella**, Personal Private Secretary to his Excellency the Mardi of Gras; **Mrs N.Y.P.D. Blue**, the (continued page 94)



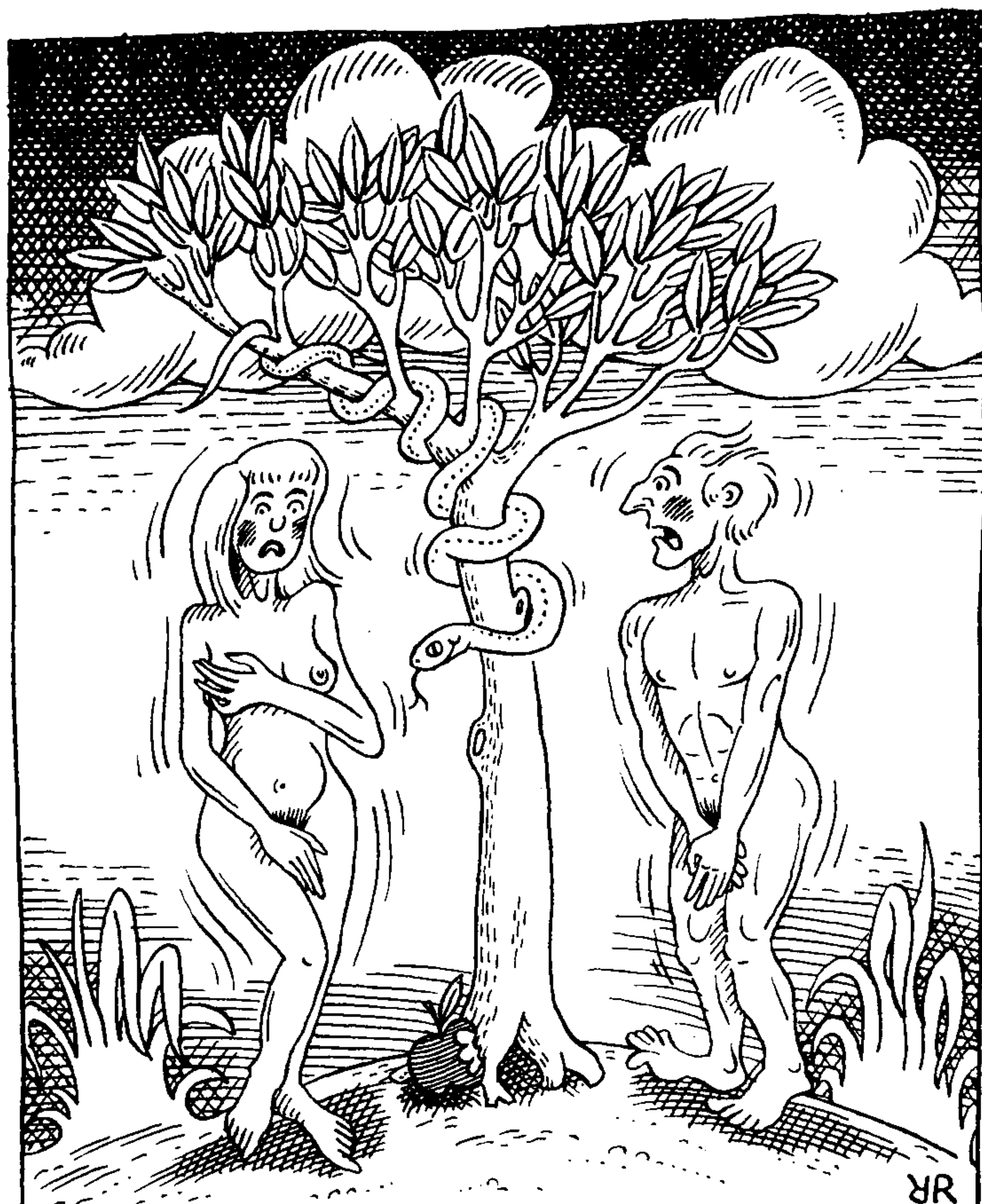
Lord Papa and Lady Nicole of Renault



The Teletubbies, Companions of Honour



Sir Donald Sinden (surely shome mistake? Ed)



SPOT "THE FALL" COMPETITION

FOR SALE



Delightful five-bedroom family home in the heart of fashionable Islington. This four-storey, end-of-terrace early Victorian house has been thoroughly modernised and includes a new fitted kitchen.

No 1, Richmond Terrace has the added advantage of being very convenient for schools (an easy 10-mile drive across London in the rush hour to Brompton Oratory, which can take as little as an hour and a half.)

Offers in the region of £650,000 only

London Underground Map

The Labour Line



KEY

Labour Line
(formerly Tory Line)

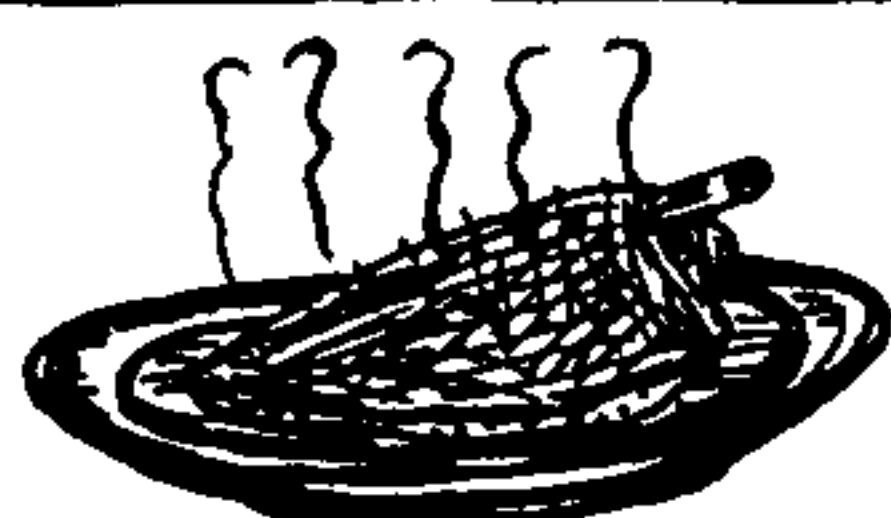
No Sell-Off

Sell-Off

Apparently ...

BY MIKE BARFIELD

HONG KONG CHINESE RESTAURANT SPECIALS



CRISPY DEAD DUCK



CHICKEN IN HAS-BEEN SAUCE



BROKEN RIBS, MILITARY POLICE-STYLE



SHREDDED RIGHTS AGREEMENTS



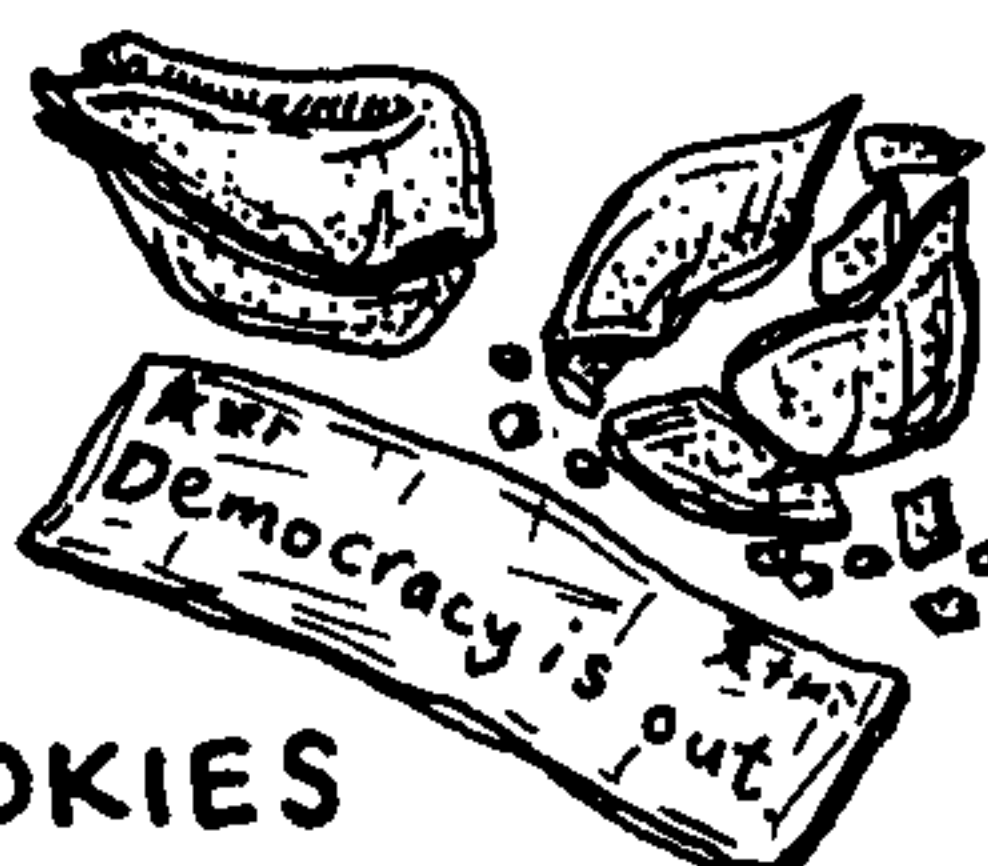
BAMBOOSHOTS (TO DISPERSE PROTESTORS)



HARD LYCHEES



SWEET AND SOUR REVENGE (EATEN COLD)



MISFORTUNE COOKIES

ULSTER 'APPEALS FOR CALM' AS MURDERING SEASON BEGINS

by Our Nother Ireland Staff Lunchtime O'Boyne

THERE were renewed fears that Ulster might be in for a "long, hot summer" as the traditional murdering season once again got under way last night in all parts of the province.

For reasons now so far lost in history that no one can remember what they are, representatives of Ulster's two communities affirm their traditional identities by parading through the streets and murdering each other.

Armageddon

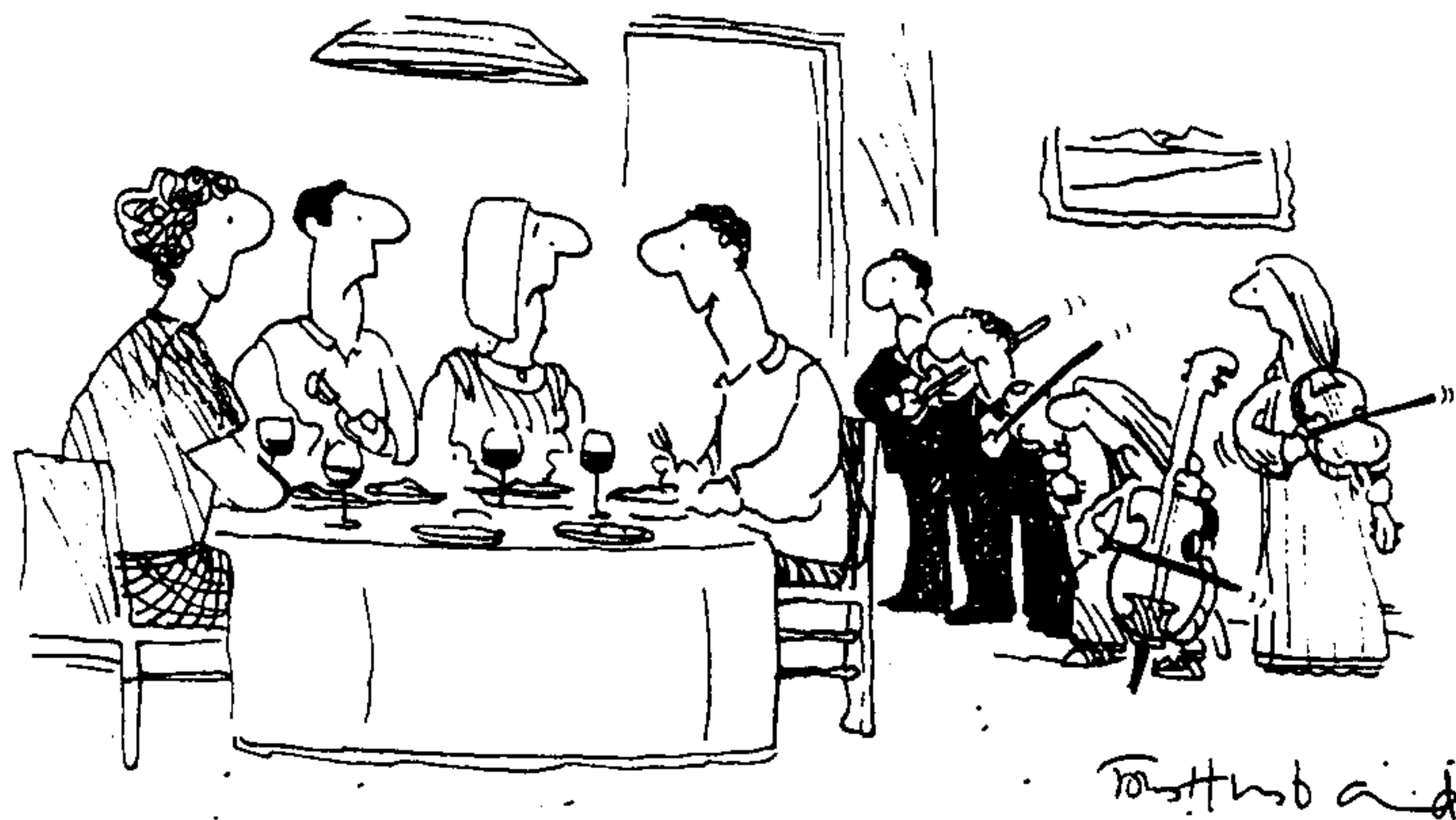
Although many observers feel that these murders are an integral and colourful part of the province's rich heritage, in

recent years there have been increasingly vocal calls for these rituals to be banned.

"These murders do very little to promote harmony between Protestants and Catholics," said a member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary yesterday, shortly before he himself became a victim of traditional gunshots from both sides simultaneously.

Despite the recent campaign to outlaw the murders, however, it seems that this tradition is still enjoyed by too many people for them to be abandoned.

The next flashpoint is likely to be tomorrow, when the funerals take place of last week's victims *(continued for ever)*

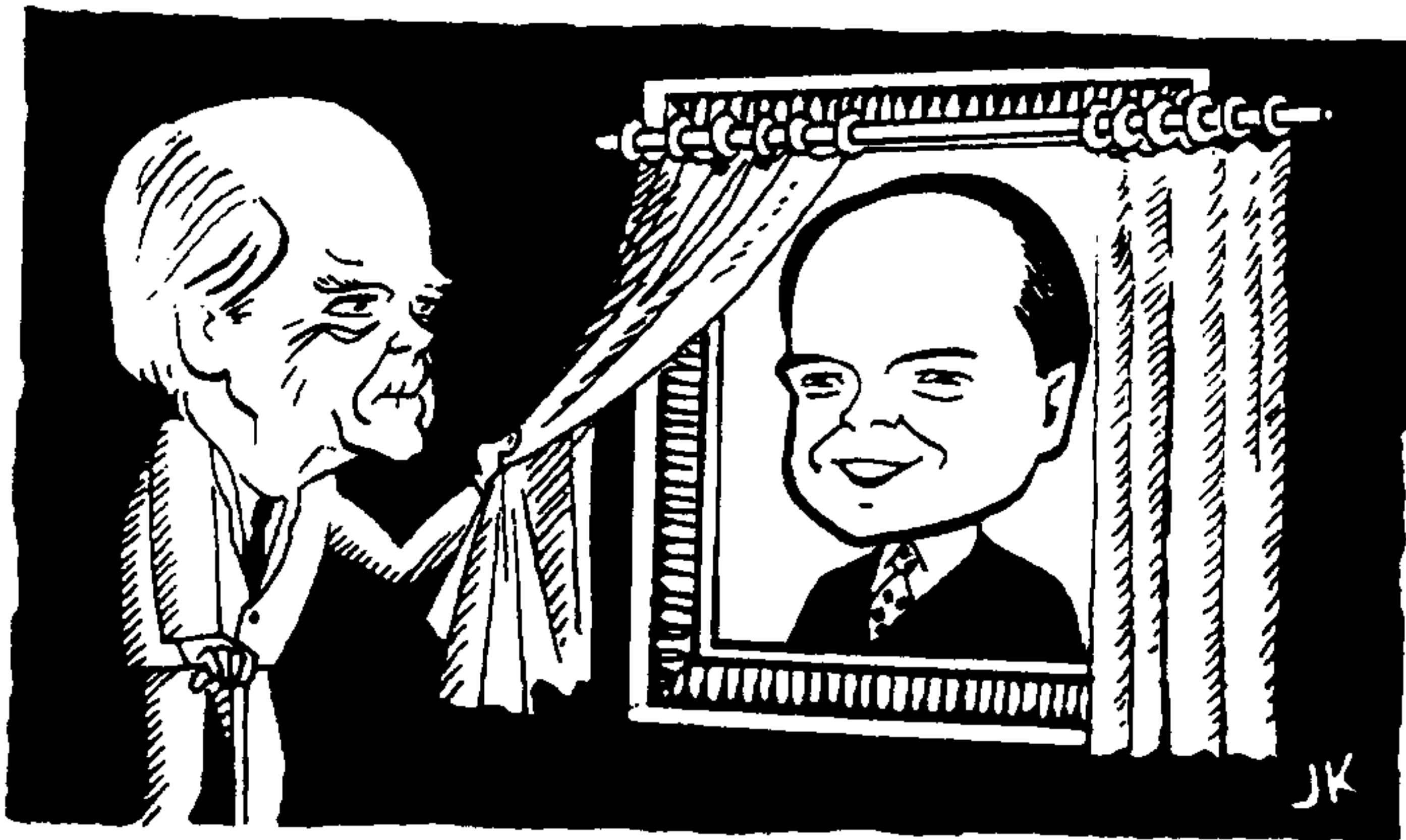


"We say - if you're lucky enough to have talented kids, make the most of it"

Book of the Month

The Portrait of Dorian Hague

by Oscar Wilde



A CHILLING tale of an elderly man who looks old, tired and clapped out. Years of promises and betrayals, compromises and evasions, fudges and failures are etched onto his sinister face. He looks every inch of 87 years old.

Yet, in his attic, he has a terrible secret. It is a portrait of a fresh-faced

young man of 36 who has no experience and is far too young to be leader of the Conservative Party.

As every day goes by, the portrait looks more immature — but the face of Dorian Hague looks more gaunt, grey and unelectable.

WARNING
Not suitable for adults

© Oscar Fry

CATASTROPHE ENGULFS BRITAIN'S HIGH STREETS

by Our Economics Team Bill Cashkill

EXPERTS were warning last night that Britain's economic recovery was being seriously undermined by a high street spending boom.

"Unless people curb this insatiable desire to buy things," said one expert appearing on all channels, "we could be looking at economic disaster on an unprecedented scale."

"There is nothing worse for a healthy economy," he continued, "than consumers going out and spending money."

"What we need," he concluded, "is for people to stay at home watching people like me on television claiming that the world is going to end unless they keep all their money in a sock under the bed."

Celeb

LIGGER





NEW LABOUR, NEW HANZ-Z-Z-ARD

New Prime Minister's Question Time 3 pm

Ms Irene Mousemat (Worthing, New Lab): Could the Prime Tony please tell us how brilliantly he did in Amsterdam? (*Labour backbenchers cheer and wave tulips in unison*)

Mr Tony Blair (Sedgemore, New Lab): I'm very glad Peter chose you to ask that one, Irene! And, if I may say so, you asked it very nicely! (*Hundreds of Labour women go wild and chant "You're what we really really want"*)

Ms Dawn Cuticura (Oxfordshire Central, New Lab): Could the Prime Minister just list for us the top three triumphs achieved by his positive approach to Europe at the recent conference? If he can't, I've got a copy of them here.

Mr Blair: Thank you, Dawn. You're quite right. The fact of the matter is that this Government inherited an appalling mess after 19 years of Tory rule, and I think we can be pretty pleased with what we've achieved so far. And we've achieved a great deal. For instance, I

(continues in this vein for most of available time without repetition, hesitation, or deviation)

Mr John Failure (Major, Old Con) (for it is he for the last time): Could the new Prime Minister explain whether he is going to charge old age pensioners to die in agony in their beds because of this Government's destruction of the health service, as part of its hidden agenda to sell the NHS off to London Underground? (*Huge Tory cheers, and shouts of "Major for leader"*)

Mr Blair: Look, the fact of the matter is, you aren't Prime Minister any more, and I am! (*Hysterical Labour applause*)

Mr Failure: Are you rulling it out or ruling it in? Yes or no?

Mr Blair: Could I say on behalf of the House how sad we all are to see the Right Honourable gentleman asking this sort of silly question for the last time. (*Whole House bursts into tears and sings "Rule it in, rule it out Britannia"*)

Mr Ashtray (Pantsdown, New Lab Dem): May I just say something at this point, to let everyone know I'm still here...

(*House empties*)



COURT AND SOCIAL

MARRIAGE

The marriage took place on Wednesday 18 June at St Margaret's, Westminster, of Mr Kenneth Clarke, son of the late Sir Edward Heath RN, and Mr John Vulcan, son of Krrrgx and Thrztp from the planet Redwood. The Chief Bridesmaid was Ms Teresa Gorpersion, HRT. Monsignor Archie Hamilton officiated, and there was a reception afterwards on St Stephen's Green for the world's media. The ceremony was interrupted when an elderly woman was removed from the congregation screaming, "Don't be vague, ask for me!" The divorce took place the following day at 5.15 pm. William Hague was named as co-respondent.

■ In the Pink Paper two weeks ago, a picture caption said It's Not Unusual contributor Jim Alexander was convicted of cottaging. He was, in fact, convicted of buggery. We apologise for the mistake.

Pink Paper

TRAGEDY

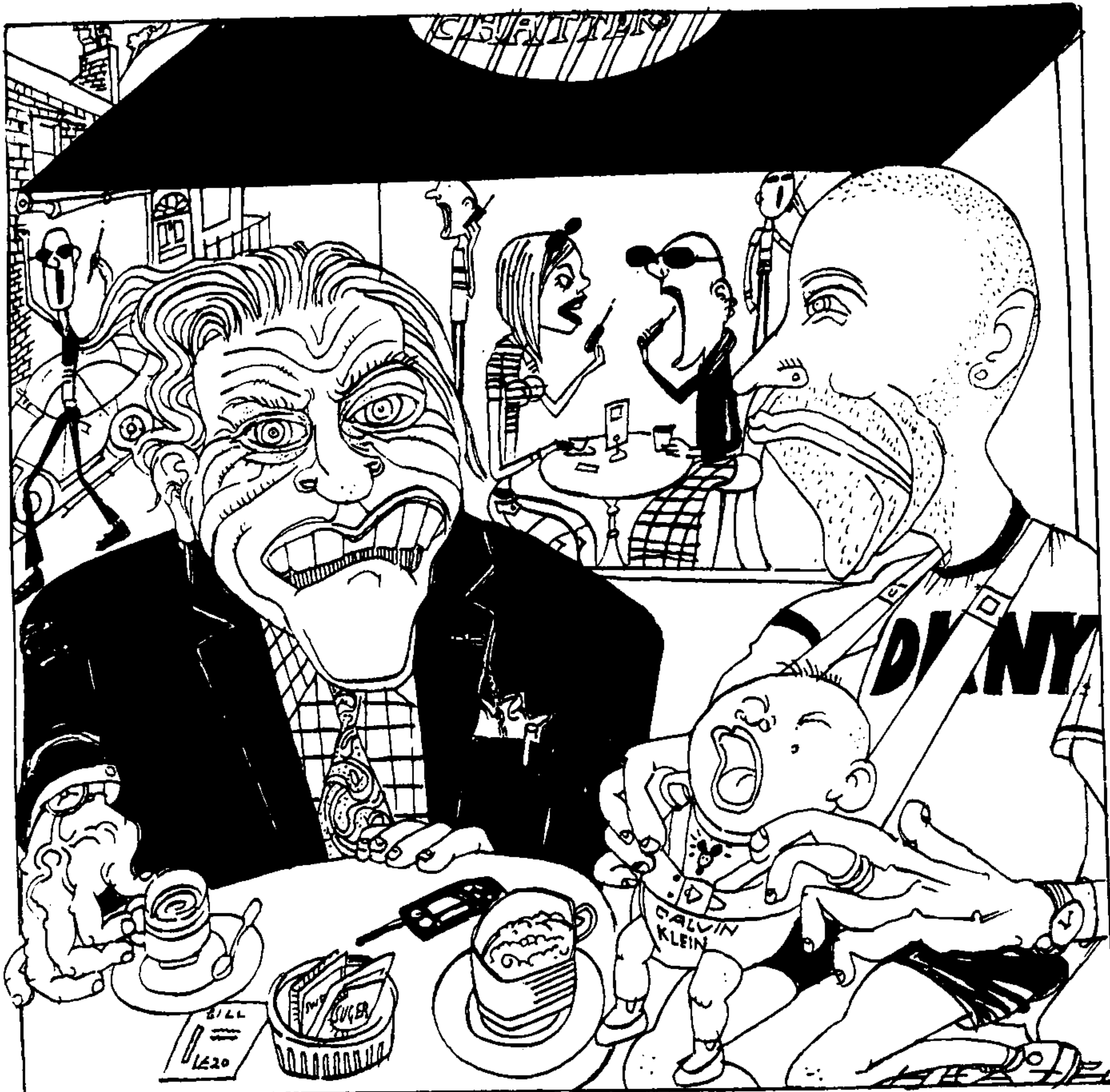
POP stars the Bee Gees and Michael Jackson are planning to record an album together, Bee Gee Barry Gibb said yesterday.

Daily Mirror

Harry Enfield's Bores Drawn by Michael Heath

15. Primrose Hill People NW1/3

"I mean when we moved here it was full of ordinary people like Alan Bennett & Kingsley Amis & Nick Hytner now it's full of advertising people & TV presenters the whole character of the place has gone downhill — there used to be a little grocers run by Ravi over there who us locals could always rely on for a piece of Camembert on tick & a marvellous down-to-earth quote for our newspaper columns now it's yet another café full of pop stars too young for me to recognise Noel Gallagher was in there the other day then that Interior design shop over there used to be 'Delilah's Deli' — a really jolly place to buy one's mozzarella & that place over there's about to become yet another restaurant in my day there were just a couple of sweet old Michelin starred places where one was happy to squeeze in next to other ordinary Booker panelists now they're all halogen lighting & people doing under the counter deals for Channel 4 no one's taken my screenplay yet & the Health food 'Quorner Shoppe's closed down & become a chemist of all things & ordinary people can't afford to live here any more when we bought you could get a perfectly respectable two bed flat for under half a mil nowadays you mustbe joking Chris Evans tried to buy our place off us for one point five we felt we owed it to the area to turn him down mind you it makes one think I mean we bought the place off Bailey for 595 & that seemed expensive at the time..."



DIARY

Strait-laced? Stuffy? Not me! Very much the opposite — though I should add from the outset that I maintain a high level of respect for convention.

In common with many of the young, I've always enjoyed supping a few half-pints of beer, or "ale". I find it a good way to communicate with people — and I'm very much into the communication game. But if I can pop into an ordinary pub and collar an ordinary bloke with an ordinary half-pint of "ale" and have an ordinary chat with him for an ordinary minute or two about ordinary things — how a swing of just 8% would win us back 32% of the seats we lost, or our extensive plans for a mammoth shake-up at Central Office — then I feel I've won him onto my side, or I certainly would have done, if only he'd hung around.

What kind of teenager was I? Like many of my generation, I had a great love of freedom. Freedom from Unions. Freedom from the Miners. Freedom from the Unemployed. Freedom from everyone doing what the hell they want. Like other "kids" of my generation, I had some pretty garish posters hanging on the wall. Along with all the obvious ones — Keith Joseph, Peter Carrington, etc — I also hung posters of first-class, up-to-the-minute pop groups like The New Seekers, The Beverley Sisters and Peters and Lee. And posters of truly excellent sportsmen like Sir Stanley Matthews. Plus a tennis poster that was immensely popular among my colleagues at school at the time: a very professional, very patriotic colour snap of a truly lovely English tennis court at the height of a splendid English summer. Sad to say, it was marred for me by the presence of a young female who had got in the way of the photographer. Sadly, the poor woman was snapped scratching her b.t.m. — embarrassing for her, not to mention annoying for the photographer. The poster was further ruined for me by the young lady's face being obscured, as she had her back to the camera. But a sharp pair of scissors and a bit of UHU can come in very handy. I secured myself an excellent close-up portrait of Margaret Thatcher, cut it out extra carefully, and stuck it over the young lady's head: the perfect wall-hanging.

It's a funny thing, but now I'll always think of Margaret like that, one moment scratching her backside, and at the next moment scratching mine.



WILLIAM HAGUE

Let me make one thing absolutely clear. I've always taken life very easy. I've never had what's known as a "master-plan". Okay, so I might have written my acceptance speech for the Tory Leadership when I was fifteen and three-quarters, but I never planned to deliver it until next summer at the earliest. And let me assure you I'm always getting up to some pretty crazy and totally off-the-wall things with my fiancée, the future Mrs Hague! For instance, I sometimes stop what I'm doing and say, "Hang it, Miss Jenkins! Let's take a break from work! We are in need of some leisure activity!" And she looks at me, and I look at her, and together our eyes drift towards... the wardrobe. Within seconds, we have removed all my nice new suits off their rails and we are checking together to see that they are all properly pressed and cleaned, with good, strong pleats in the trousers.

What we in the Conservative or Tory Party need or require is certainty — or at least something to feel reasonably certain about, all things considered. And I make few bones about the fact that this is definitely what I can offer, quite a lot of the time. If I have to, I will make myself pretty unpopular, for a day or two. I established my reputation for decisiveness the morning after my meeting with Michael Howard. The previous night, I had decided to enter the leadership election on his ticket — but I took less than 24 hours to come to the firm decision that actually this was not what I really wanted to do. And

this is the spirit I hope I can bring to the Conservative Party: a strong, firm, decisive spirit, or something of the sort.

A Fresh Suit. That's the campaign slogan on which I ran for the leadership of the Conservative Party. And throughout the campaign I have never ceased from saying that our party must be refreshed and reinvigorated, regenerated and revitalised if we are to win the next election. "You know, Ffion," I said to my fiancée over an inexpensive but nutritious dinner the other night, "if we are to recreate our Party's faith in victory, if we are to give it back its self-belief and its will to win, if we are to restore its grip on core values and key principles, then we must unite to offer our Party excitement, energy, enthusiasm, dynamism, energy — or did I already mention energy? — and enthusiasm. Do I have your agreement, Ffion?"

But Ffion had fallen asleep. It had been a long day, what with getting up at the crack of dawn to switch on the trouser-press. So I'll reiterate my core beliefs to Ffion this evening when we are sitting around a table on a one-to-one basis. It's only through broad-based discussion leading to widespread agreement that these things can be made to work, and if she'll have to accept collective responsibility if she wants to come on board.

One of the interesting things about me — and a complete list may be obtained from my office on presentation of a stamped addressed envelope — is that I am an adherent of Transcendental Meditation. But let me reassure those of you who might be thinking this a little "unusual" that that is far from the case!

My method is simple. I sit in the most relaxed position, first taking care not to crease my suit, making sure that my cuffs remain clean and that my freshly-polished shoes are not in danger of being scuffed. I then close my eyes, and, keeping one eye firmly on the time, repeat the personal mantra specially selected for me by my guru to suit my own individual character: "Smugsmug-smugsmug," I chant, "smugsmugsmugsmug." Then I snap out of my TM onto an altogether renewed spiritual plane of awareness and pure karma, my mind and spirit refreshed and re-awakened. This way, I am all set for the higher tasks of the day ahead: cutting state benefits to unmarried mothers, cracking down on young offenders and bringing back the death penalty. Cheers!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



KINGSDOWN Crematorium is to open its doors to the public for a day.

The whole building will be open, providing a route from the chapel through to the crematory hall and the committal room. Other special features include viewing the Cremulator, which reduces crematory remains to a fine ash.

Mr Wheeler hastened to say this would not be functioning. "It is not a live tour," he said.

Swindon Evening Advertiser

Literary Review

Boys will be bores

Rancid Aluminium
James Hawes

Headhunters
John King
(both Jonathan Cape,
£9.99 each)

THERE is some very faint consolation to be gained from the thought that this was bound to happen. In the frail, dumbed down social landscape we inhabit, popular culture gets everywhere in the end, even as far as the comparatively exalted redoubts of modern fiction — and so it's scant surprise that the new wave of laddery espoused by *loaded* and the rest of those joke men's magazines should eventually spill over on to the pages of the novel.

New Lad fiction? It's gross. It's about the exchange of punches and bodily fluids. It's badly written. Its practitioners get profiled under strap-lines like *Writer who shagged Madonna talks about drugs 'n' sex* (Tim Willocks, if you really need to know); and it would be simply hilarious if it weren't strewn all over Waterstone's being taken seriously by people who should know better.

As it happens the two items under present consideration are by no means identical. *Rancid Aluminium* is highbrow laddery, if you'll pardon the oxymoron, all larky gags and preposterous plot-lines about East European gangster scams; while *Headhunters* (fucks and fights) weighs in at the lowbrow end of the scale. And yet other similarities, in terms of catchphrases, worldview — if one can use such an elevated term about these worm's-eye views of the human condition — and procedural quirks, are quite uncanny.

Their protagonists, whether university graduates or burly hod-carriers, behave sadly *all the time*: drink too much, chase women, treat the women badly when they've cornered them, listen to late 70s pop records, routinely beat people up and are themselves beaten. The shared vocabulary takes in "Merks", "sad" (or in Hawes case "saaad") and "tops", meaning "at the upper limit" ("she was 14 tops"). The first head-butt in *Rancid Aluminium* ar-

rives on page 38, although Mr King, whose outlook on things is even more crunchy and visceral, gets his in as early as page 31.

What happens? Oh God, do I really have to tell you? Well, *Rancid Aluminium* is about this thirtysomething director of a business training video company detected in some book-cooking (the jokey sub-plot has he and his wife trying to conceive) who ends up cruising the Volga with some highly unpleasant local entrepreneurs. *Headhunters*, on the other hand, takes in a collection of roguish young cards who call themselves the "Sex Division" and award themselves points for sexual encounters on an ascending scale relative to the degree of humiliation inflicted (oh yes, *Rancid Aluminium* has its soccer metaphor too, in its hero's continual invocation of an entity called "the Great Ref in the Sky").

Which is worse? James Hawes probably, if only because of the horrible jauntiness, the twee references to "Memory Lane" and "Honesty Street", and the rather obvious spectacle of a clever bloke — Mr Hawes is currently on leave of absence from his lecturing job at the University of Swansea — slumming it a bit. However, the sententious garnishes that decorate Mr King's offering are no less offensive, as when an engaging hoodlum called Balti, having charitably decided not to assault someone, reflects: "You had to have morals or you were fuck all in this world, but it was finding the right morals and sticking to them that was hardest." There's also some dreadful stuff about teenage mothers, although it must be said, in mitigation, that *Headhunters* does have one half-way likeable male character who eventually becomes a dad and settles down.

Predictably, all this is exceedingly well thought of by the right-on prints. Hawes, whose second novel this is (the first one, *A White Merc With Fins*, was translated into ump-teen languages) has been compared by excitable American critics to young Marty Amis, while King, who has already penned a sober little novel about soccer violence called *The Football Factory*, is apparently some kind of working-class social realist. My own view, for what it's



worth, is that both authors are actually women — just as James Brown, *quondam* editor of *loaded*, now of *GQ*, is a front for an axe-wielding feminist harpy — and that this kind of rubbish is really an immensely subtle weapon of the sex war. I mean, no man with all his faculties intact could write this stuff and *mean* it, could he?

But wait a minute. Am I just being extremely thick and confusing idiocy with blokes ironically exposing blokish attitudes? One fears not. If the jump-on-his-testicles nastiness of *Headhunters* represents any kind of exposure, then it's so gloating and remorseless as to amount to a celebration. And here, softly and insidiously, one sees the change in the cultural climate. Twenty years ago the seeker after gratuitous male sex and violence could find it in the playground copies of Richard Allen's *Skinhead* novels. Now it comes in glossy covers courtesy of Messrs Jonathan Cape. Dan Franklin, Cape's eminently respectable publishing director, ought to be ashamed of himself.



BOOKS & BOOKMEN

WE live in violent times, but it's still shocking that a branch of Waterstone's in Dublin felt obliged to hurriedly cancel an author's signing session last Saturday for "security reasons".

The disappointed author, a Mr Gerard Adams of West Belfast, had been planning to spend the afternoon autographing copies of the paperback edition of his (not entirely candid) autobiography *Before the Dawn*. Alas, Waterstone's manager Anne Griffin decided that, in view of recent events, it would be inadvisable to have the bearded pacifist sitting behind a desk in the shiny new Jervis shopping mall, just off O'Connell Street.

She declined to explain whether the distinguished author was more at risk from passing loyalists (generally thin on the ground in central

Dublin) or from a hostile local population. Either way, the cancellation is a further blow for Adams, the book's publisher Heinemann and its Irish partner Brandon. Sales of the hardback have been sluggish, especially in Australia (where the author has been declared undesirable and banned from entry) and the United States (where the Clinton administration is withholding a fresh visa, pending a renewed ceasefire).

WHAT is going on at Faber & Faber? When Robert McCrum left for the *Observer*, Faber made it clear it was looking for a charismatic, maverick person of letters to succeed him as editorial director.

A few months later it was announced that the job had gone to a bright insider, Julian Loose, who was being promoted. Chairman Matthew Evans commented that he had been frightfully amused by all the rumours, but that he had intended to appoint an insider all along.

Now, less than a year later, and with Loose still in place, it seems Faber is on the look-out again. Can this be true? All very puzzling!

'Bookworm'



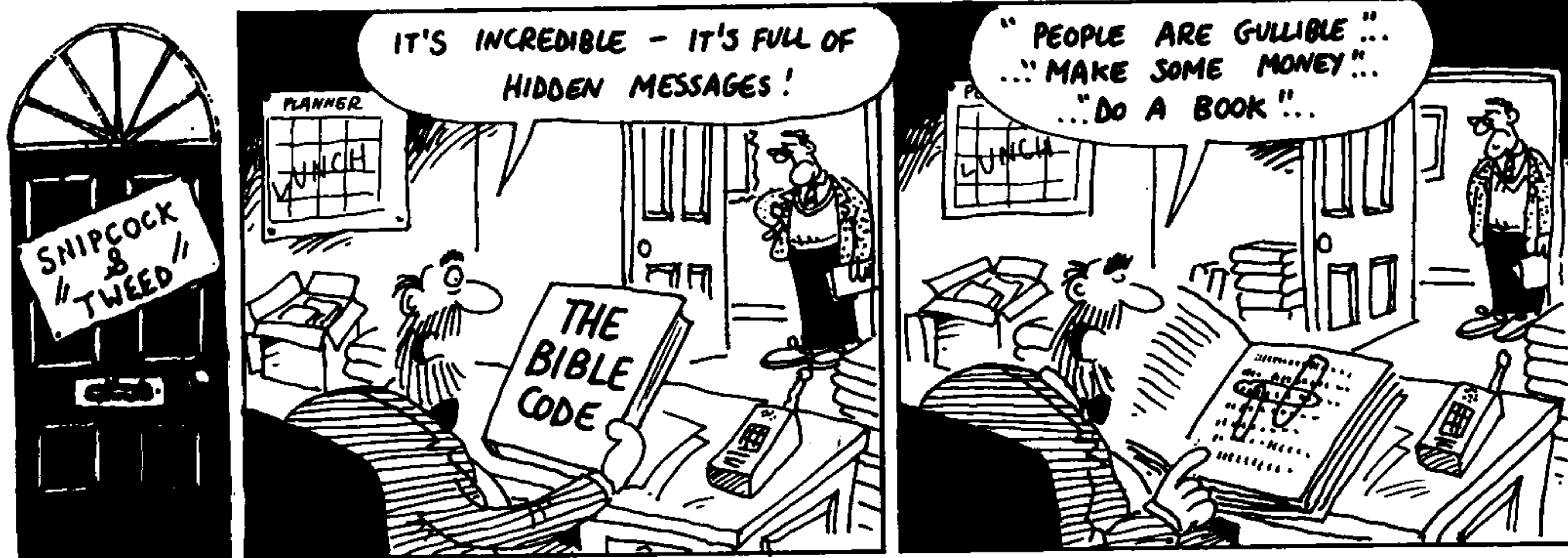
WORLD OF OPERA

THE great and good who "manage" the Royal Opera House have suffered another bout of bad publicity since it was revealed that "good causes" money from the national lottery had been used to pay for staff redundancies.

Only days later the ROH had to announce that it would not be putting on its swansong production of Verdi's *Macbeth* because of technical reasons.

Staff are furious that even the productions themselves, the one thing they could be justly proud of, are now being affected by poor management. The reason for the cancellation was a technical cock-up involving the hefty set which, compounded by staff shortages, meant there simply wasn't enough time for rehearsal.

It is now up to ROH chairman Lord Chadlington, aka Peter Gummer, to overcome these difficulties. He recently appointed Mary Allen, his pal from the Arts Council, as chief executive of ROH to help him out (see Eye 925). This means that the people who meted out the lottery millions to ROH now have the joy of spending it. What they have done in effect is to spend lottery money for opera so ineptly that an opera has to be cancelled. *Bravissimo! Encore!*



footnotes

EDUCATING

NINA

THE ground rules for "incorporated" (ie privatised) further education colleges are being followed carefully at Doncaster College, whose principal is Terry Ashurst.

Rule No 1: *Get your lover a good job at the college and make sure he/she is promoted.*

Mr Ashurst agrees that soon after his appointment as principal he hired his mistress Nina Regan as a "secretary to the principalship" (three VIPs including Mr Ashurst). Some years later he divorced his wife and married Nina Regan, whose rise in the college hierarchy was impressive. She became clerk to the governors — a job Lord Nolan insists should be strictly independent — and director of personnel.

The *Eye* asked Mr Ashurst if her appointment and subsequent promotion could have been seen to give rise to a possible conflict of interest or be construed as nepotistic. He said, initially, that the appointment was made by the governors, but later agreed that he was involved in the appointment "as part of the panel".

Rule 2: *Pay top managers more and teachers less.*

Mr Ashurst agrees that his own salary has risen to £71,000 plus £8,000 pension contributions while he is desperately trying to find £1.65m cuts demanded by the Further Education Funding Council. Lecturers and other staff have been encouraged to sign new contracts, to work harder for less money and to deal directly with the management, not with the union. Mr Ashurst points out that the college has achieved "fantastic grades in everything including governance and management".

Rule 3: *Encourage foreign trips for top people at the college.*

Mr Ashurst explains that the British Council pays for "exchanges" with foreign



BONNY FROM DONNY: Terry Ashurst

students. Did the foreign trips cost the college anything? "No," he replied.

A few months ago Ashurst's deputy Tony Longworth disclosed that 18 foreign trips, including one to Taiwan, had cost the college £10,325. He revealed that a college credit card "held by the principal" had registered £2,400 mainly for travel and accommodation.

Rule 4: *Sack your staff, and then sit in on their appeal hearings.*

Trevor Dunn had worked as a lecturer at Doncaster for a year from 1995-96 when he was sacked by Terry Ashurst. His appeal was heard and dismissed by Terry Ashurst.

Mr Dunn was advised by a barrister's opinion that the principal, in hearing an appeal from his own decision, had "infringed the rules of natural justice". The action was settled out of court with a payment of £2,000 to Mr Dunn. Mr Ashurst agrees these facts but describes the incident as "a technical process issue". He says the college has never lost an industrial tribunal case.

Rule 5: *Carry on sacking, especially lecturers on the old pre-privatisation contracts.*

Mr Ashurst is currently interviewing lecturers and asking them why they should not be compulsorily sacked. Active trade unionists on the old contracts are specially vulnerable.

PS: A prominent supporter of Mr Ashurst's management style on the board of governors is Eric Straw. Mr Straw made the national press several years ago when as a British Rail freight manager he sacked two men with 40 years' service for drinking a pint of lager at lunchtime to celebrate the retirement of a colleague.

Pro Bono of contention

■ **THOUGH** legal aid is not available for inquests, Inquest, which campaigns against unnecessary deaths in cells, managed to find a lawyer for the family of Peter Austin.

Mr Austin, a black father of two, hanged himself in a cell under Brentford magistrates' court, west London, while employees of Securicor stood by. Patrick O'Connor QC, who is representing the family at the inquest, is working *pro bono* — for next to nothing.

He is surrounded by no fewer than six other sets of lawyers: for Securicor, which has the £92m home office contract to mind prisoners in London police cells; for the Securicor employees present at the incident; for the Metropolitan police commissioner; for the local authority (Hounslow); for the Police Federation; and for the home office. None of these lawyers is working *pro bono*; most are paid out of unlimited public funds.

GIGGERY POKERY

■ **OUR** little piece in the last issue about War on Want charging commercial rents to tiny charities has opened old wounds.

The charity sponsored a concert, at the Festival Hall on 24 October 1995 in honour of the Chilean musician and poet Victor Jara, who was murdered in the coup by the Chilean junta in 1973. Tony and Cherie Blair were there. A successful evening netted £16,000.

Executive director Margaret Lynch proposed that salary and staff costs be deducted from the proceeds. The director of campaigns, Ken Hume, took out a grievance against her. Hume was variously accused of disloyalty and madness, and was formally charged with "insubordination". He stuck to his guns and eventually agreed to leave — provided that all £16,000 went to the charity, which it eventually did.

Cornhill Pests 2

■ **IN APRIL** last year the *Eye* asked Cornhill Insurance about Daglen, a scam run by Grimsby firemen who had conned 250 people into buying rotten property investments worth £2.5m.

The firemen, who went to prison, told police they were working as agents for Cornhill. By contrast, a Cornhill spokesman told the *Eye*: "we were unaware of any Daglen scheme until late 1990".

Er, whoops! The conned investors sued Cornhill. In an out of court settlement, They will now get at least 80 percent of what they lost.



NEIL HOMER

THE wail of sirens from speeding police cars is a common enough nuisance. Less common is the knowledge that when they are most needed the sirens don't work.

Neil Homer, 20, died instantly in December 1995 when his car was hit by a police vehicle charging through a red light. The passenger in the police car, PC Robert Dallow, was killed as well. The driver of the police car, PC Leslie Collins, was convicted of causing death by dan-

gerous driving and served six weeks of a three-month prison sentence. He is now back as a serving officer with West Midlands police.

During the case forensic evidence from the smashed police car showed that the sirens had been turned on. Yet all seven witnesses to the crash said they had not heard any siren. Dennis Homer, Neil's father, dug out statements by the 20 other witnesses who had seen or heard the accident. None of them heard a siren.

The manager of the West Midlands car fleet, James Elias, who gave evidence about the Peugeot 405 driven by PC Collins. His statement said: "The 100-watt output emergency sound system fitted to this type of vehicle is the maximum

fitted to all West Midlands emergency vehicles with the exception of dedicated motorway vehicles. These motorway vehicles are fitted with 200 watt output speakers, due to the consistently high speed patrol and emergency response requirements, where speeds well in excess of the national speed limit of 70mph would cause dramatic reduction in the audible advance warning of an approaching police vehicle."

The 200-watt speakers were not fitted to non-motorway vehicles because "these vehicles do not operate regularly at higher speeds". The conclusion was clear. The lower-watt sirens cannot be heard when the cars are going at higher speeds.

Mr Homer also noticed from the

records of the car chase that the sirens on the police car were clearly heard early in the chase when the car was going much slower. When it crashed, the police car was doing 100mph. The sirens couldn't be heard.

Denis Homer thinks his son might still be alive if the sirens had worked. He has been refused access to the tape which recorded what happened inside the police car during the chase. He has tried to alert the police to the probable and crucial fault in their warning systems, but to no avail.

FACT: Though one of their number has been convicted of causing Neil's death, no one from the West Midlands police has apologised, even obliquely.

THE SOUND OF SIRENS



In the City

CONTRARY to what the past 30 years and centuries beyond might suggest, Northern Ireland, like the City, is a place where people sometimes forgive and forget. But, as also in the City, too much self-induced amnesia can be a very expensive thing — as shareholders in Belfast textile engineers Mackie International have realised.

After less than three years on the stock market Mackie is now a basket case after reporting massive losses, suspending its shares and seeking a £5m cash lifeline. All this after shareholders pumped in some £16m and the taxpayer, via grants from the Industrial Development Board (IDB), another £6m. And also after the directors and their families realised more than £5m from selling shares at close to a peak price in March 1996 which was almost three times the suspension level in April this year.

For the disaster-prone IDB this brings embarrassing echoes of the De Lorean debacle which cost taxpayers and creditors more than £70m in 1982 money. But the comparison is more than just analogous — and not just because once again the Northern Ireland office has proved a soft touch prepared to hand over large cheques in order to “buy” jobs — the Mackie factory is close to the line in West Belfast dividing the two communities.

While most criticism has been heaped on former Mackie chief executive Pat Dougan — understandable in view of his timely share selling — too little attention has been paid to a direct link to past troubles: Mackie's finance director Shaun Harte, the same Shaun Harte who had a starring role in the De Lorean fiasco.

Harte had just arrived at the IDB's predecessor, the Northern Ireland Development Agency (NIDA), in 1978 when De Lorean came calling with his gull-winged dream machine. Harte was one of those chosen to go to the United States to “check out” the car and its creator. He came back an enthusiast. His support and that of others at NIDA persuaded then Northern Ireland secretary Roy Mason to open the taxpayer's chequebook in an abortive bid to buy Catholic hearts and minds.

Harte became one of the NIDA non-executive nominees on the boards of both the Belfast manufacturing company and De Lorean Motor Corporation in New York. He enjoyed trips to board meetings in New York and a three-day visit to Las Vegas for a sales drive.

Within a year Harte moved in late 1979 from working for NIDA as its watchdog to working for De Lorean as director of planning at a salary reputedly five times what he was paid as a civil servant. There was opposition to his move inside NIDA, but Harte and his supporters, lead by De Lorean, prevailed. He was still on the payroll when the money ran out, the dream died and the con was exposed in 1982.

Contrary to what NIDA may have hoped — it saw his role as monitoring its investment — Harte provided no early warning of the scandal to come. Though sitting on the DMC audit committee he rang no alarm bells when, in 1979, finance director Walter Strycker queried several matters concerning the project and De Lorean's spending.

Among these was the deal with GPD Services in Switzerland whereby De Lorean and his accomplice

Colin Chapman ripped off \$17.8 m through Switzerland. Harte had been one of the directors who had obtained Bank of England permission for the payment of part of that money by attesting to NIDA's support.

The most charitable verdict on Shaun Harte is that he was naïve and an easy victim of a consummate conman's charm. But others point out that he was an accountant who was in his 40s, not his 20s. They also wonder why he stayed loyal to De Lorean and why De Lorean, who could not spell loyalty, kept him on. “Get some shit on the man's shoes,” was a De Lorean motto when it came to dealing with those around him. However, no evidence ever emerged to explain the Harte-De Lorean relationship other than stupidity and greed.

Clearly the IDB — assuming it remembered — had no hard feelings when, more than a decade later, Harte reappeared in West Belfast at Mackie. How could it? Frank Higgins, another De Lorean veteran from NIDA, was also involved. So how unsurprising that the IDB should provide grants of £2.2m and then £4m for Mackie. And how coincidental that last year Mackie should decide to invest £2m in a Belgian customer, Uniwear, which in turn had invested £1.5m in Leicester hosiery firm Pex, which went on last January to acquire ailing IDB client Bridgedale, making socks in Co Down, for almost £2m.

The Mackie dream did not even last as long as De Lorean. In March the company announced losses of £400,000 for 1996 compared with profits of more than £3m in 1995. This was after write-offs totalling almost £2m. A month later it was announced that “certain matters have come to light which may... lead to a restatement of the accounts”. Last week Mackie announced the real losses were £7.2m as a result of £6.8m of extra write-offs. This included writing off the Uniwear investment as well as providing for contracts with the Belgian company.

Finance director Harte, it was disclosed, had left leaving his old friends at the IDB to pick up the pieces. Ironically Mo Mowlam, Labour's first Northern Ireland secretary since Roy Mason, has also been left to pick up the remaining piece of De Lorean detritus — the civil claim against auditors Arthur Andersen.

Having forced the \$200m-plus claim out of the US federal court into the New York state court, Andersen is seeking to move the case all the way back to London. The high court hearing to decide that issue is due momentarily.

If that succeeds, or even if it does not, Mowlam must soon decide whether to press ahead with a legal action which has already cost more than £10m since it began in 1985. Unlike successive Tory predecessors, Mowlam (with no responsibility for the costs to date) could jump through the window of opportunity and cut a deal if Andersen would make an offer which could be presented by the spin doctors as a result, even if it wasn't. And Andersen is said to be very friendly with “new” Labour.

So a deal could be on — especially if the claim comes back to the British courts where there are no triple damages. And nobody would be happier than Shaun Harte. For Andersen has named him as a co-defendant in its counter-claim alleging negligence in failing to spot the fraud.

NOW that Jonathan Aitken has been impaled on his scimitar of truth, there should be no reason the *Guardian* and others should not turn their attention to his nemesis: that great benefactor of public life, cleanser of Parliament's



Augean stables and upholder of moral values — Mohamed Fayed.

The phoney pharaoh's self-admitted role as a corrupter of politicians is long overdue for attack. After all, had it been a crime to bribe MPs Fayed would be in the dock with Hamilton, Smith and others. But will the hacks bite the hand that has fed so long and so well? This task may be left to *Vanity Fair* and its pending libel action with the pharaoh due in court come October. That is if Fayed — for the first time ever — is prepared to give evidence and be cross-examined in public about his pretend life and real crimes.

NEW Tory leader William Hague discloses that he is to declare war on sleaze. He clearly finds no contradiction with making such an announcement days after appointing the far from lily-white Lord Parkinson as party chairman.

The Sara Keays affair might not strike everyone as qualification for promoting the Tories' new sleaze free image, but then Parkinson also has been somewhat unlucky in his business relationships.

He became a director and then chairman of quarry group Starmin when it was controlled by the Abdullah brothers, who should carry an investors' health warning. Starmin amassed losses totalling £28m between 1992 when Parkinson joined and 1994 when he left. Much of this was due to curious accounting decisions taken by the Abdullah-controlled board before they were forced out in mid-1993. But the rest was on Parkinson's watch as chairman. Parkinson also attracted attention as chairman of the Dubai-based Dolphin group run by controversial Kenyan Asian businessman Ketan Somaia, a favourite of Kenya's corruption-stained President Moi. Somaia was embroiled in a banking scandal in Kenya which could have cost the country up to \$400m, although Parkinson claimed his associate had been cleared by an official inquiry.

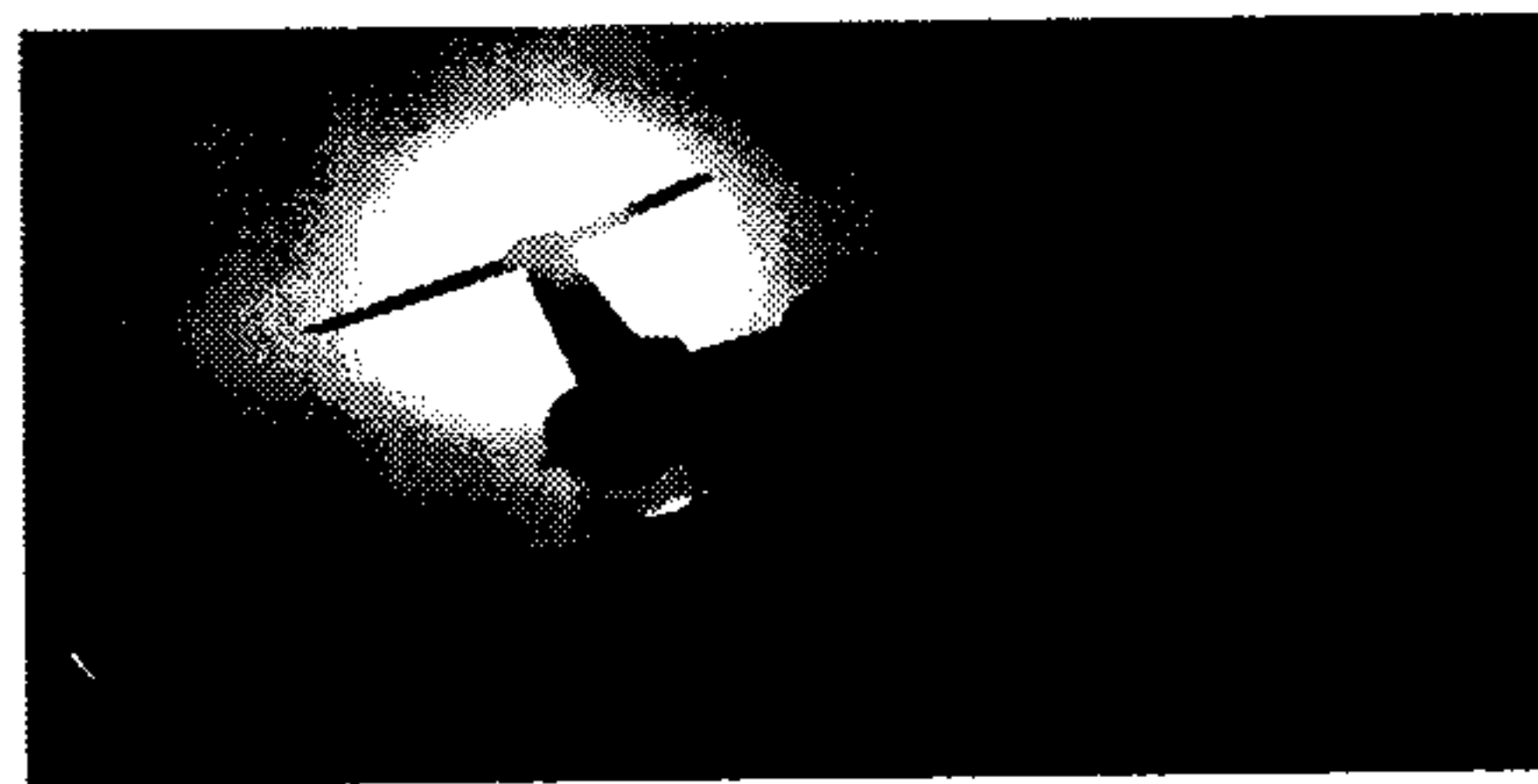
Parkinson was also embarrassed by the Department of Timidity & Inaction's investigation into suspected insider-dealing involving Suter Group chairman David Abell. Parkinson's stockbrokers Walter Walker had invested in timely purchases of Suter targets. Parkinson explained the brokers acted without instruction or knowledge from him using funds they held in a discretionary account. The DTI later cleared Abell. Clearly none of these matters, should prevent Lord Parkinson from a return to public life as Tory party chairman.

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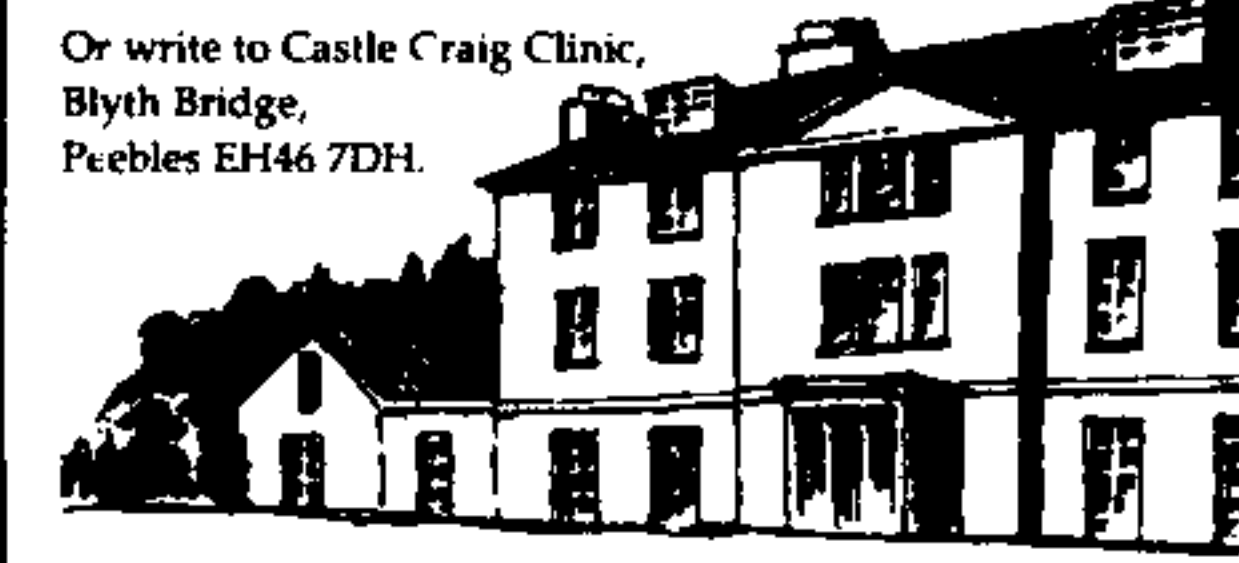
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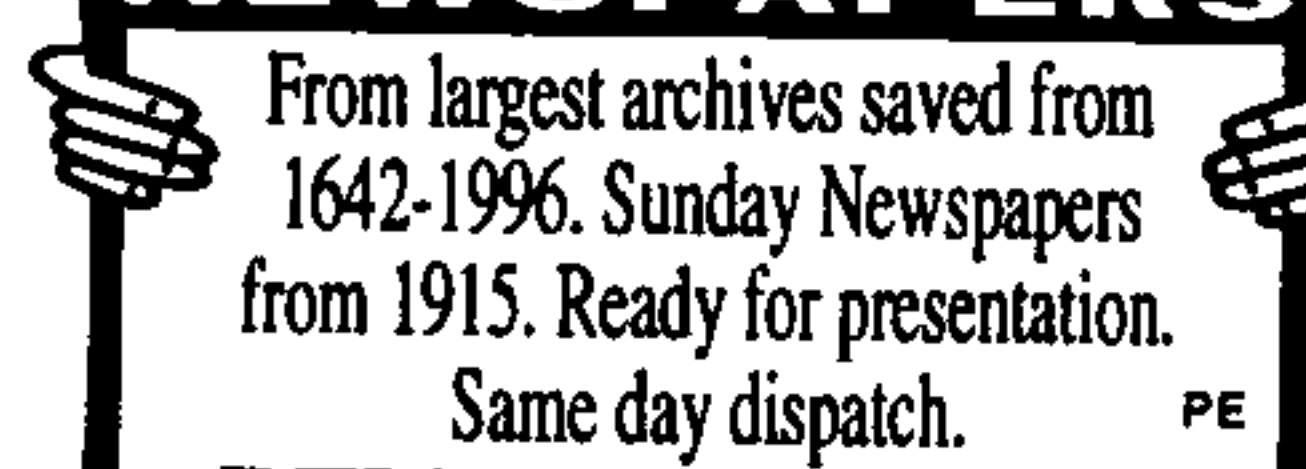
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S.O.S. — lone mother, literate, artistic, seeks interesting employment, central/west London. Box 0727.

MUSICIAN, IMPRESSIVE CV, with own recording studio, seeks opportunities or entrepreneur to use my talents. Box 0827.

ARTICULATE CHAP, 24, LLB + LPC + 1 Year High St. Exp, seeks articles 1997/98 London/South East. Box 0927.

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EYE LOVE

SINGLE MALE, 38, suffering involuntary celibacy seeks interesting female fellow sufferer for intensive therapy programme. Cheshire/NW. Box 1027.

WARM FURRY MAMMAL, (fit, forty, female), planet-sized brain, no baggage, seeks mate. Photo appreciated. Box 1127.

MASTERFUL, SLIM, handsome, dominant male, 36, seeks attractive, naughty girl, 25 to 45, married/single — Discreet fun/friendship. Box 1227.

THINKING MAN'S CRUMPET — sought for fun and games by tall, middle-aged executive with ties. Discretion assured. Midlands. Box 1327.

LONGHAIRD, BLUE-EYED, insatiable male, likes bikes, music. Seeks (married?) excited female! Box 1427.

FEUDAL ESQUIRE, 34, wonders if royalist damsel can prepare jugged hare. Northumberland. Box 2027.

DO MATURE WOMEN make better lovers? Tall, dark, athletic, professional male living in northern England seeks unattached lady with intelligence, libido, good figure and a warm heart to find out. Photograph please. Box 1627.

EAT, DRINK and be merry, for tomorrow... Happily married man, 32, London, seeks female for fin-de-siècle romance. Box 1727.

CHARMING GENTLEMAN, 30s, seeks pretty woman. Box 3327.

UNFULFILLED, GENUINE, professional man, late 40's, seeks similar woman for discreet daytime liaison. M40 Corridor. Box 1927.

IF YOU ARE a married lady 50+ in the Thames Valley who feels neglected and unappreciated I'd like to abseil from my helicopter into your window with a box of Milk Tray (discreetly of course!). Box 2127.

TRAVEL WRITER, 48 but very well-preserved (must be the alcohol). Tall, slim, decent looks (if not always thoughts). Based London/SE. Seeks attractive woman with gsoh, interest in the arts, food and drink, prepared to put up with regular short absences in return for lots of devotion and duty-frees. Photo appreciated and reciprocated. Box 2227.

NW SURREY — youthful, humorous male graduate, 40's, platonically married, seeks uninhibited lady soulmate for intimate fun. Box 2327.

FRENCH COLONIAL background blonde, special, attractive 5'8, bright, educated lady — looking for tall, kind, 50ish public school soulmate — interested in either history of art, golf and travelling. Box 2427.

MARRIED MEDIA MOGUL, 38, seeks discreet and exciting affair with voluptuous, passionate and adventurous woman. London; photo appreciated. Box 2527.

MAN 45 — bright, fit, attractive, kind, attached, seeks similarly unfulfilled woman any age, North London. Box 2827.

TALL ATTRACTIVE continental lady, early 50s, married in name only, seeks love/soulmate. Professional gentleman n/s, 5 foot 10 inch plus, 50 to 60. If you are in similar situation please write (genuine replies only). Kent/SE London area. Box 2927.

ATTACHED LADY SOUGHT, 40+, by kind, warm, caring, sporty single guy 31. London, Surrey. Box 3027.

TRAVELLING COMPANION. Tall, attractive male, 31, seeks visually imaginative female. Spain/Australia in mind. Photo. Reply Box 3127.

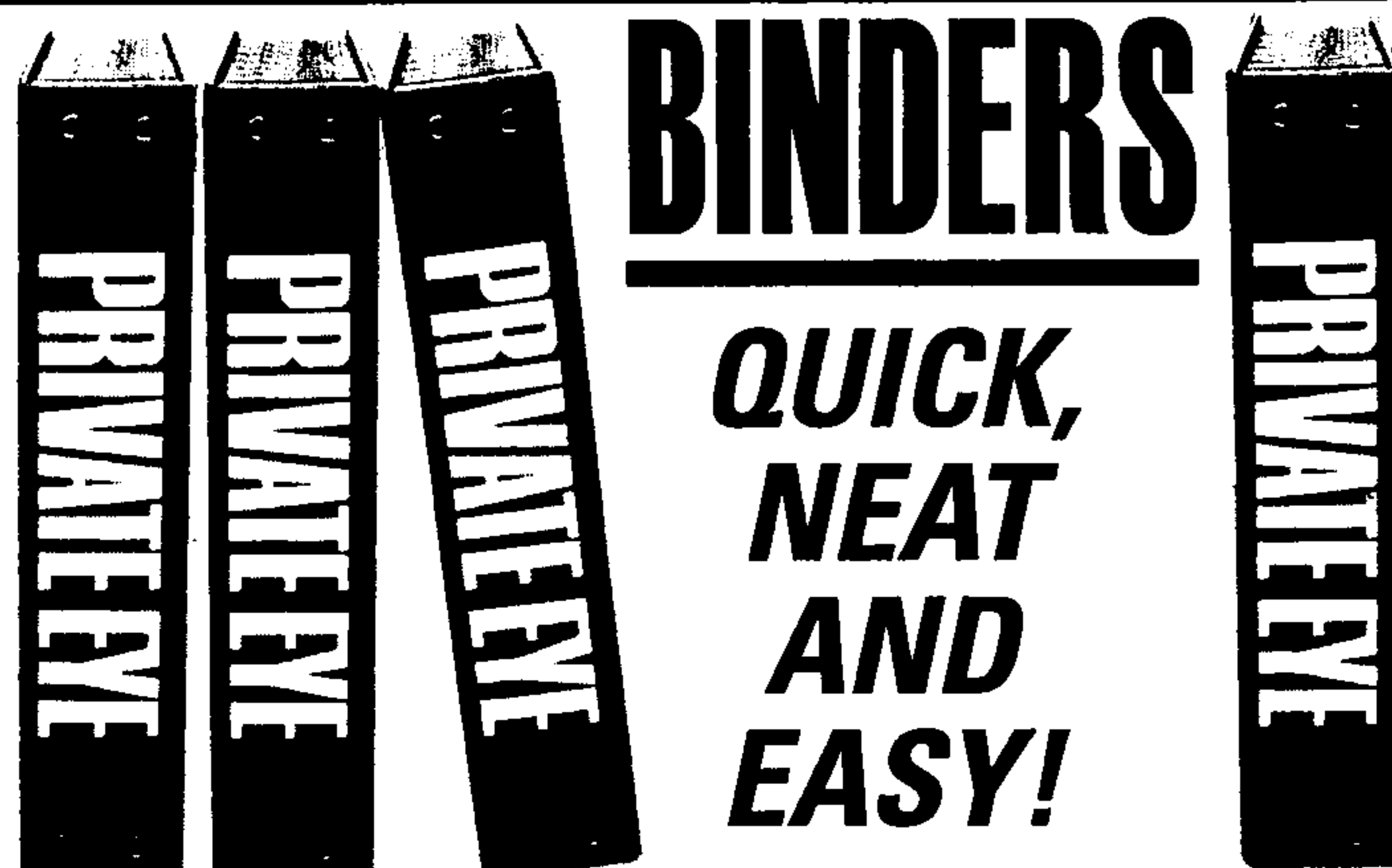
DARK-SKINNED very attractive 42 year old woman seeks gentleman 45-70 years old for fun and champagne. Write to PO Box 1143, Bristol 99 2LR.

CAMBRIDGE GRADUATE, mid 20s, seeks nice female for trips to cinema, pubs, theatre etc in London. Box 2125.

M, 51, TAXI DRIVER (usually nights) n.s., divorced, 20 years mild, often imperceptible r.r.m.s., wants similar woman to write to, love, live with. Preferably slim, playful, literate, decisive. I am slim, playful, literate, dilatory. Large flat next to forest. Fitted kitchen. Singing cleaning lady. N.E. London. Letter and photo please. Box 1527.

TALL WOMAN, 40, attractive, intelligent, warm, sensual, seeks similar man for passionate liaisons. Box 3227.

MALE, 28, looking for old-fashioned, country loving Emma Thompson lookalike. Somerset. Box 1126.



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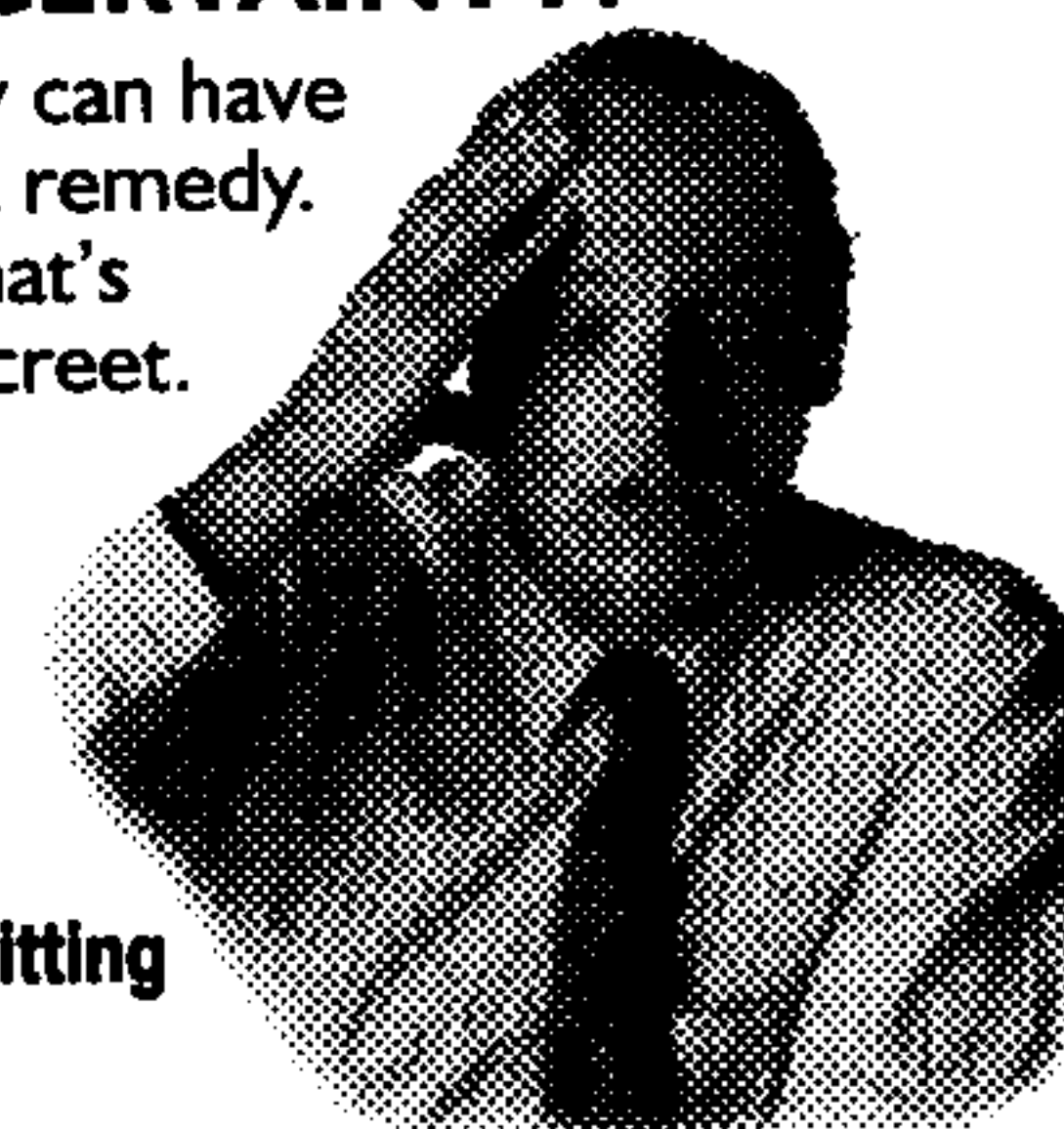
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SEPARATED CITY MAN, 42, brains, wits, humour intact. Seeks warm, attractive, intelligent 30-something lady to share his days and nights. Photo please. (I'm not a frog, so you needn't be a princess.) Box 1525.

EYE SOLDIER

BORED INFANTRY OFFICER, Bosnia, seeks correspondence from any females whatsoever. It'll make a change from access writing. Why not send a photo? Box 1827.

DASHING BLADE, 28, Bosnia bound, seeks correspondence to maintain his sanity. Box 3427

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